

The Kirkholt Burglary Prevention Project, Rochdale

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with the assistance of Robin Brown

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Crime Prevention Unit Papers

The Home Office Crime Prevention Unit was formed in 1983 to promote preventive **action against crime**. It has a particular responsibility to disseminate information on crime prevention topics. The object of the present series of occasional papers is to present analysis and research material in a way which should help and inform practitioners whose work can help reduce crime.

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Foreword

In 1985 a conference in Bournemouth organised by HM Probation Inspectorate considered the ways in which the role of the probation service could be developed to contribute to the prevention of crime. One outcome of the conference was the Kirkholt burglary prevention demonstration project, which started later that year, with funding for research from the Home Office, and staff from the Greater Manchester Probation Service and Greater Manchester Police Force. The aim of the project was to reduce the high level of residential burglary in a local authority housing estate in Rochdale.

The problem solving method adopted by the project team involved obtaining and analysing a range of types of information on the crime problem in Kirkholt (including interviews with local offenders, burglary victims and the neighbours of those victims) and devising a range of preventive measures in the light of the picture obtained. Victims who had been burgled more than once ('multiple victims') were accorded priority. The preventive measures adopted included improving the physical security of houses, removing coin-operated fuel meters (a major target of burglars), introducing property marking and setting up mini neighbourhood watch schemes involving a victim and his or her immediate neighbours. These actions involved the local authority housing department, the gas and electric utilities, the local victim support organisation and area officials of the Manpower Services Commission. The project therefore adopted a multi-agency approach. Local community involvement came about through the formation of a crime prevention group.

The report presents the preliminary results of an evaluation which showed a substantial drop in the level of residential burglary, with no signs of displacement to other nearby areas or to other forms of crime. A reduction in 'multiple victimisation' appears to have made a significant contribution to the overall fall in the burglary rate.

Further action is now under way in Kirkholt building on the initial success, but this time aiming to reduce the motivation for crime. With the aid of Home Office development funds, the probation service, the police and the university researchers are seeking to tackle the linked problems of alcohol and drug abuse, debt and unemployment. A further report describing this second phase, and an evaluation, will be prepared, in due course.

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Introduction

In the front of his novel, *Howard's End*, E. M. Forster places a cryptic two-word message - "Only connect". The message is appropriate for very many aspects of human affairs. Nowhere is this more true than in crime prevention, where information, responsibility and expertise are scattered whose connection would make for a much more powerful thrust towards effective work. A theme which runs through much recent work supported by the Home Office Crime Prevention Unit is the attempt to forge links between those who have something to offer. The Home Office Circular 8/84 enjoined a host of local agencies to take an active interest in matters of crime prevention. Put less politely than the Circular did, the tendency had been for agencies to shuffle off their crime prevention responsibilities onto the police, who in their turn accepted the inappropriate burden. An identical circular was issued by all the relevant Ministries (except the Northern Ireland Office, which has recently issued the circular in modified form as CP/ 1/87). It would be perverse to claim that the spirit of 8/84 has yet suffused local authority thinking - indeed we gained clear evidence in Rochdale that it had not. However some local agencies in some areas are enthusiastic, and others are biddable. Overall many are willing in principle to engage in crime prevention programmes.

In this the Kirkholt project, the priority of two aims were often in tension. On the one hand following 8/84, we aspired to establish robust links between agencies so that in the long term crime prevention would be effective. On the other hand we wished to show quickly that it was possible to prevent some crime of a kind traditionally thought intractable, namely residential burglary. Ideally we wished to do both, but we often wondered which we should strive for as a priority. Should we be content to nurture promising inter-agency collaboration, even when it was misconceived? Should we include an element of a burglary prevention package even when it involved the work of only one agency? The problem troubled us to the extent that at one stage we asked the Home Office which of the aims we should strive for as a priority. After the time appropriate for such an august Ministry to reach a conclusion, we were told that the priority was to prevent crime. The links were a highly welcome bonus. It is no small tribute to those with whom we worked that the links have been forged anyway, despite the priority of the crime prevention aim.

The decision was made to concentrate on the Rochdale area, and on the Kirkholt estate within it. Rochdale is a town that once belonged to a group of South East Lancashire mill towns, but which now finds itself within the county of Greater Manchester. It is policed by the Rochdale division of the Greater Manchester Police, and also houses the Divisional Headquarters of the Greater Manchester Probation Service. We chose the Kirkholt area which, by both reputation and statistics of recorded crime, represented a challenge. Situated two miles south of Rochdale Town Centre and policed by the Rochdale North Sub-division, Kirkholt is a large Local Authority owned estate of some 2,280 dwellings. It has the desirable characteristic (for our purposes) of being an area with well-defined boundaries. It is bounded by two

motorways, the M62 and A627(M) on its southern and western sides, the Rochdale ring road to its north and the main Rochdale-Oldham road (A671) to its east.

The rate of *recorded* domestic burglary on the estate was over double the rate of all burglaries, reported and unreported, characterising 'high risk' areas in the 1984 British Crime Survey (Hough and Mayhew, 1985). Domestic burglaries on the estate in the first five months of 1985 were equivalent to an annual rate of 24.6%. This was particularly dramatic given that the housing type of nearly 90% of units on the estate were of types associated in the British Crime Survey with only a medium rate of burglary victimisation. By any standard, therefore, Kirkholt suffered a severe problem of domestic burglary.

In the tradition of crime pattern analysis established through the work of the Home Office Crime Prevention Unit (e.g. Ekblom, 1988), the immediate task was to generate a more precise awareness of the problem, and thereby of what might be done to reduce the rate of domestic burglary. With very little information from agencies other than the police being available in late 1985, police crime report forms were scrutinised. There too, precise information relevant to crime prevention was not recorded. For instance, even where method of entry was described, the description was too brief and cryptic to form the basis of crime pattern analysis. In the following section we describe the information we gathered to obtain a clearer idea of patterns of burglary within the estate, which in turn informed our choice of initiative.

Sources of Information

Interviewing Burglars

The probation service based in Rochdale agreed to interview all offenders convicted of burglary in a dwelling who had been convicted and sentenced for offences committed in the Rochdale police division between January 1st and June 30th 1986. Of those so identified, 77% were interviewed, the shortfall being accounted for by offenders' failures to make contact and their refusal to be interviewed, in almost equal measure. In total 76 offenders were interviewed. Fifteen of these had committed the burglary of which they had been convicted on Kirkholt.

The offender questionnaire¹ was used to gather data far beyond what the probation service or indeed any other helping agency would normally seek. Distance of the burglary from home, modes of transport used, reasons for choice of house burgled, premeditation, planning, knowledge of house burgled, of the victims, day, time and circumstance of the offence, types of property known to be in the house, wanted and stolen, the method of its disposal, and feelings, reasons and motives for the burglary, were all covered.

(1) A copy of each questionnaire/survey form referred to in this publication is available on request from the authors.

The offender questionnaire was completed by probation officers during structured interviews with convicted adult burglars. (Seven juveniles were interviewed by the social services department.) The particular difficulties of this approach are obvious. Most domestic burglars receive a sentence of immediate custody. Thus officers, in the course of their busy lives, had to make time to visit prisons and other places of detention. Those familiar with the prison system will know that prisoners cannot always be easily located, and organisational exigencies sometimes mean they cannot be interviewed. In our study, too, prisoners had to give their consent to being interviewed, so the journey could be wasted. All but four of the 76 burglars were male. Their modal age was in the 21-25 band. 95 % of those answering the questions on residence lived in property rented from the council. Over half had lived at their current address for three years or less. 77% were single, divorced or separated. They had been convicted at their last court appearance of a total of 135 burglaries, and had asked for a total of 932 others to be taken into consideration. The sample contained 15 people who each claimed to have committed fifty or more burglaries before. The sample, whilst modest and necessarily biased, therefore represents a very much larger set of burglary events.

The most striking point to be taken from the offender interview was the extent to which burglary, at least by convicted Rochdale burglars, was highly local. The second was the apparently overwhelming importance of signs of occupancy in target choice. The interview was in three parts. The first asked about general techniques and target selection, of all burglaries committed. The second asked about specific target choice and technique in relation to a specified burglary of which the interviewee had been convicted. (The specification of the event was that of the interviewer, not the interviewee. This was to avoid the interviewee selecting more interesting, but atypical, burglaries.) The third part concerned motivation and generally what led up to the burglary. Thus both first and second parts contained similar information. The only difference was that, when the offenders were asked the more specific questions, the basis of target selection seemed even more local and dominated by cues of occupancy. For example, when asked generally, 67 % of the sample said that most or all of their offences had been committed in the Rochdale-Middleton-Heywood area, and 30 % answered 'yes' to the question "Do you just break into houses in your neighbourhood?" When asked "What is the distance (in miles) you travel from home to the houses you break into/have broken into?" 85 % said five miles or less, and 53 % two miles or less. When asked about a specific burglary, this distance was less than a mile in 63 % of cases. 77 % of burglars had walked to the target house. 25 % knew the occupants of the burgled house. The differences between the answers to the general and specific questions may reflect a tendency to exaggerate the range of one's criminal activity, or might reflect a greater chance of apprehension when burgling very local houses - after all these were specific offences among the minority the police had cleared. Whichever of the possible alternatives one believes, domestic burglary in Rochdale takes on an almost claustrophobically local aspect. This is particularly important because of the increased chances of recognition of an offender which comes with local crime.

When asked about specific factors which would deter them, more than half stated they would be deterred by signs of occupancy, a visible burglar alarm or high visibility at the point of entry. More than half checked occupancy by ringing the doorbell or knocking on the door. The means of entry was mainly by forcing a window or door, only sixteen of the burglars gained access because the premises were insecure. This seemed to suggest that the scope for a campaign of the 'Lock it or lose it' type would be somewhat limited, at least in Rochdale.

Only 36% of the burglars said they had committed the offence in question whilst alone. 67% were in the house for less than ten minutes. Of those who were in a position to give an answer (ie those who were not caught on the premises) a perhaps surprisingly high percentage, 43 %, disposed of their goods through shops or dealers. Offering burgled goods for sale in such a high proportion of cases presumably means that there could be advantages in property marking and purchase registration schemes whereby goods remain identifiable especially with the local nature of burglary. Only eighteen of the burglars claimed to have an idea of the profit they would make before they went in. Of those who had such an idea, the modal estimate was a modest £200.

When asked about the reasons for offending, around one quarter of the burglars acknowledged the role of drink, either because they were drunk at the time of the burglary or because they burgled to pay for drink. 32 % linked drug use with burglary in the same way. 70% were unemployed at the time of the offence, of whom 88% linked that condition to the commission of the crime. 41 % owed money, most frequently to the fuel boards and in rent.

In terms of their attitude towards the offence, 54% of the burglars claimed to "like enjoying what it gives - but hate doing the job itself." Other assertions with which over half of the burglars agreed were "You see how easy it would be and you can't resist the temptation to go in even if you hadn't been looking for it" (51 %), 'You don't think about whether you will get caught and what will happen to you then" (70 %) and, somewhat inconsistently with that, "If you know you will get a tough sentence then you will think twice" (51 %). Remarkably few burglars accepted "sad tale' characterisations of their offending, such as "People like me have never had a chance so we make up for it by crime (21 %) and "You think "everyone's on the fiddle so why shouldn't I have my share?" (8 %)

Interviewing Burglary Victims and their Neighbours

The police inspector seconded to the project undertook to interview the victims of all burglaries in a dwelling on Kirkholt committed between 1st January and 30th June 1986. The interviews took place in the victims' homes some 6 to 8 weeks after victimisation. This delay was deliberate. It allowed completion of operational police investigation of the crime. In total, 305 relevant offences were reported to the police as having been committed on Kirkholt during the period in question. Of these 237 (78%) were interviewed. Of those who were not interviewed, 26 had moved from the area, 33 were not contacted after four visits, and two declined to be interviewed.

The kind of information sought through the interview included visibility of the burglar's point of entry, a detailed record of the burglar's activities, including movement and actions within the dwelling, levels of security hardware and their use, insurance details, occupancy and its signs at the time of the burglary, previous victimisations, views on police response, views on the solvability of the crime and the recovery of the property stolen, fear of victimisation both before and after the crime, perceptions of the crime, practical problems following victimisation, use of other agencies, involvement within the community, suggestions of how to reduce crime and willingness to participate in crime prevention initiatives. Also included were details of householder and occupancy.

Although the victim questionnaire was timed during the pilot stages to take 35-45 minutes to complete, it was found that the victim so relished the opportunity of talking to a police officer about the crime that the interview took from 90 minutes to 2 hours.

Interviews with victims of burglary have now been carried out fairly extensively (eg by Maguire, 1982). It is also not unknown to contrast location and other characteristics of burgled and other houses within the same area (eg by Winchester and Jackson, 1981). We are not aware of a previous attempt to interview neighbours as we did in Kirkholt. Our reasoning was as follows: the most precise and full information about target choice involves the comparison of victimised households specifically with those which are the most obvious alternative targets, namely those which neighbour the victimised dwellings and are physically nearly identical with them. (The strictly applied guidelines for selecting the neighbour to interview are reproduced as Appendix A). Such a comparison also allows the social characteristics of burglary victims to be identified. The neighbour questionnaire was modelled on the victim form, with modifications where appropriate.

It was not possible for the seconded police officer to undertake these interviews. The task was carried out, after briefing, by members of the Rochdale Special Constabulary, who conducted 136 neighbour interviews. The shortfall of neighbour interviews relative to victim interviews is almost wholly a result of the limited availability of special officers. In what follows, we will set out some of the results which emerged from analysis of victim and neighbour interviews.

In common with national figures, less than 20% of burglaries took place during the midnight-8am period. A third of all the burglaries took place between noon and 6pm. The pattern by day is very uneven, with two peak periods, Wednesday-Thursday and Saturday-Sunday. 36% of all the burglaries took place on a Wednesday or Thursday, and a further 23 % on Saturday or Sunday. The midweek bulge could not be accounted for in terms of occupancy patterns. The average value of goods stolen was £137, of cash (including meter cash) £46, and the average amount of damage caused was £21. Meter cash and audio-video equipment were the items most often taken. There is a marked pattern of daily variation in what is taken, burglary of meter cash being very

much a Wednesday-Thursday activity, 39% of such burglaries taking place during the day on Wednesday or Thursday. The theft of audio-video equipment is distributed much more evenly throughout the week.

It was interesting that 70% of points of entry were visible to neighbours. Only 35 were visible to passers-by. Generally, the survey indicated how important neighbours and victims could be in watching out for each others' homes but it also emphasised the fact that they would need to be mobilised to take advantage of this visibility.

Method of entry achieved was typically the first one attempted. In two-thirds of cases entry was through a window, in contrast with the literature on point of entry which indicates that entry through windows and doors is evenly split (Litton, 1985). Having window locks did not reduce the proportion of window entries. Over half of window entries did not involve the breaking of glass. As for doors, the achievement of entry by mere exertion of pressure on the doors themselves (22 % of all burglaries) suggests that fitting good locks to existing frames will not achieve much, at least in housing of the type found on Kirkholt.

Interestingly, both victim and neighbour interviews suggested that people are able to recognise access points which were most vulnerable to the burglar. 51 % of the neighbours said it would have been easy to break into the victim's house at the point chosen by the burglar. Only 18 % of victims thought it would have been difficult for the burglar to gain entry. We should not ignore the benefits of hindsight with which these judgements were made but, put the other way, it would have been surprising if citizens did lack this sort of insight - unless one takes burglars to be a species apart, informed by a particular criminal cunning in target selection. One of the practical implications of this is that most people seem to know at least where to look for points of vulnerability, and therefore know where the presence of strangers might be worth reporting. A second point is that the seconded police officer was able to feed citizen judgements of vulnerability into the target hardening feature of the initiative described later in this report.

An incidental benefit came from data on victim and neighbour perceptions of the police response. These data were fed back to the Greater Manchester force in a form which did not allow identification of individuals. On the whole, victims appear to have been satisfied with the police response. Only 28% thought that the police could have dealt with their cases differently. However, their experiences did argue for some 'fine tuning' of police response. For example, most victims received a follow-up visit from a detective officer, but 42% did not. Of those who were not visited, 60% were expecting a visit, so there was a failure to meet public expectation in this respect. Scenes-of-crimes officers visited only a minority of victims (48 %), whereas 65 % had expected someone to follow up the initial visit to take fingerprints etc.

92 % of victims did not know who their local area constable was. Only 6% of victims had spoken to him/her. The victim will probably not appreciate that area constables have a large number of other tasks to perform, for example supplementing police

strength elsewhere by working on a response vehicle. The point is not whether the allocation of personnel is appropriate, simply that the appellation 'area constable' may create in the victim expectations which are unrealistic.

In 87% of cases we found that the burglary victim had not been given a Greater Manchester Police form 301e. The issue of such a form is supposed to occur in all cases, and provides a police contact telephone number and includes an indication of where crime prevention advice may be obtained.

At present, most victims believe that 'their' burglar would not be caught. Only 20% thought that the chances were good or fair. Most victims believed that there was little chance of getting their property back. Most neighbours thought likewise.

The involvement of other agencies was brought into focus by a question which enquired about the uses victims had made of such agencies and the problem which had led them to make the approach. From these responses it was clear that the fuel boards, the local authority housing department and the local victim support scheme in particular would be indispensable in any initiative we proposed to take, and indeed could benefit from our results. 21 % of victims at the time of interview (which it will be recalled was some six weeks or more after the burglary) were left with an unresolved problem resulting from their burglary because they did not know whom to contact. For example one of the most interesting comments from victims was relevant to the Rochdale Housing Department.

Nearly one third of victims were concerned about the delay in making their homes secure after the burglary. Bearing in mind the real vulnerability of these people and their heightened anxiety, this is important. This information was fed back to the local Housing Department and made a further contribution to our thinking about possible initiatives. A joiner (an additional appointment) would be required to respond quickly to work on burgled homes. The Housing Department responded to this positively and with alacrity.

The interviews with victims identified some of the effects of being burgled. These undoubtedly speeded the development of the initiative and enhanced our commitment to it. People worried more about burglary after suffering one. 58% said that before the burglary they had worried about leaving their home unoccupied; after the burglary the figure was 83 %. The number who had worried before the burglary about being burgled while at home was 34%; after the burglary it was 56%. In practice however only 28 % of homes in our sample were occupied at the time of the burglary. Similar concerns were reflected in the views victims expressed about the level of crime in the Kirkholt area generally. 62% said it was bad. A further 8% thought it was getting worse and 9 % wanted to move out of the area because, for them, crime had reached an intolerable level.

One immediate focus of action was suggested when we looked at the number of victims involved in community associations, groups, or with other activities in the area. 89% had no such involvement. Yet when they were asked whether they would be prepared to assist with a crime prevention initiative if one were set up in the area. 63% said they would get involved and another 30% gave the idea qualified support. Neighbours were also largely willing to become involved: 66% said they would definitely become involved and 13 % gave the idea their conditional support.

Turning to the data which were yielded by the contrast of victim and neighbour questionnaires, two approaches were adopted. The first approach was to identify those characteristics of victim houses which distinguish them from neighbour houses. In summary, the fitting of windowlocks did not distinguish victimised from similar houses, but the lack of a dog and the lack of signs of occupancy did. 22 % of victim households and 40% of neighbour households kept a dog. At the time of the burglary, 42 % of victimised houses were said by the victim to look occupied. In contrast, 80 of neighbours said their houses looked so.

When asked why they thought the victimised house had been chosen, 40% of neighbour households supplied what they took to be an 'obvious' reason. Low actual or apparent occupancy was cited in 47 % of the reasons. 22 % of those giving reasons specified meter cash or video equipment as attractive targets. A further 14% specified victim characteristics, either in terms of vulnerability or lifestyle.

The second approach was to look for any differences in the rate of multiple victimisation. This issue of multiple victimisation came to feature prominently in our study. There are suggestions (Sparks *et al.*, 1976) that *some* people or places are prone to become multiple victims. On Kirkholt, both neighbours and victims were asked how long they had lived in their present dwelling, and how many burglaries they had previously suffered there. Obvious arithmetic yields the prior annual rate of burglary victimisation of the two groups. The victim group had an annual rate of prior victimisation over twice as high as their neighbours. One of the problems about taking this difference at face value is the possible confounding effect of different lengths of tenancy in the two groups. If the neighbours had been tenants longer and the rate of burglary on the estate had risen over time, then the annual rate of victimisation of the neighbours would be lower on that basis alone. In fact neighbours *had* been tenants longer, on average, than victims. We took account of this by appropriately weighting annual rates of victimisation but still found that the victim group had a 60% higher rate of victimisation than their neighbours. This understates the higher vulnerability to repeat victimisation because we have no way of telling whether the same places had been burgled during previous tenancies. Such burglaries would increase the difference in rates observed between first and repeat victimisations.

There are pressures which work towards the departure from the estate of burglary victims at a faster rate than others. The unpleasant experience of burglary may stimulate or intensify efforts to leave the estate. To the extent to which this is so, the difference between victim and neighbour groups in prior victimisation is even larger

than we found it to be. An analysis of 1986 domestic burglaries on Kirkholt clarified the picture. During the year, we were able to calculate that the chance of a second or subsequent burglary was over four times as high as the chance of a first, on Kirkholt. The way we did this was to say if 2 in 10 houses on Kirkholt were burgled during the year, and assuming no extra vulnerability to repeat victimisation, the probability of a second burglary should be 2 in 10 of the 2 in 10 houses burgled once (.2 x2. =.04). This is just like tossing an unbiased coin, where the probability of tossing heads once is .5 and of tossing a sequence of 2 heads is .5 X.5. In fact, on Kirkholt in 1986, the probability of a home being burgled for a second time was four times the expected rate calculated this way. The practical implications come through more clearly when the point is presented differently. Nearly half of those burgled in December 1986 had been burgled at least once before during 1986.²

On a common sense level it seems reasonable that a property which has proven vulnerable, and therefore attractive, to a burglar will continue to appeal to the same and other burglars. In other words, the features central to target selection remain over long periods of time. Winchester and Jackson's (1981) study of burglary victimisation, for example, identifies factors which distinguish burgled from other houses. The factors, such as "located on the nearest main road" and "set at a distance from the nearest house" are not ones which change quickly. This means that a dwelling remains a likely (or unlikely) target for further burglary over long periods.

Independent support for the hypothesis that burglary victims are disproportionately likely to be victimised again comes from use of the screening questions in the main questionnaire of the British Crime Surveys of 1982 and 1984. In all relevant comparisons, the number of repeat victimisations greatly exceeds expected levels. Table 1 sets out the relevant data from the British Crime Surveys of 1982 and 1984 combined. It contrasts observed and expected frequency of repeat burglary victimisation. It will be noted that the observed incidence of multiple victimisation is dramatically greater than expected. Put one way, the probability of being victimised for a second time, given that a household has been burgled once, looks to be around 3 to 4 times as high as the probability of being victimised for a first time, using national samples.

Table 1: Expected and observed prevalence of multiple victimisation (burglary and theft in a dwelling): combined British Crime Survey data, 1982 and 1984.

	2+	3+	4+	5+
Observed	111	48	24	15
Expected	32	1	0	0

Note: 1 Weighted data: unweighted n=21232

2 Cell entries rounded to whole numbers

(2) This rate was not the result of a freak month in December. Ordinary least squares regression of cumulative 1986 repeat victimisation rates also suggests that by December, 48% of burglaries would be repeat burglaries.

Other Sources of Information

While the burglar, victim and neighbour interviews formed the largest formal set of data, contact was made with as many of the agencies and groups within Kirkholt as was possible. Informal contacts were made with groups including the Tenants' Association, the churches, youth club leaders, community associations and schools. All helped us to understand the estate, and confirmed us in the view that the development of a support system for the project within the estate was essential for its success. We also referred to data from the 1981 census, which gave us some insight into the composition of population within the estate to compare with that of our victim sample, so that we could identify which, if any, types of people were especially vulnerable to the offence of domestic burglary.

In July 1986 the project team organised a half day seminar, chaired by the Chief Probation Officer of Greater Manchester. All relevant agencies were invited to contribute ideas for preventive action based on the information presented about the local crime pattern, as an exercise in joint problem-solving. Those present included representatives of the North West Electricity Board, Rochdale Victims Support Scheme, Rochdale Education Authority, Rochdale Borough Housing Department, Greater Manchester Police, Greater Manchester Probation Service, Association of British Insurers and Home Office Crime Prevention Unit. The seminar cleared a lot of ground regarding the project. For example, it was at that meeting that the movement towards alternatives to cash meters as an element in the project really began. The personal contacts alone were enough to make the seminar worthwhile. Afterwards, several agencies made further contacts with us.

The Preventive Initiative

Choice of initiative

We had from offenders, burglary victims and neighbours almost an embarrassment of riches by way of information. The data from burglars could have justified a debt counselling service, aid with drink or drug problems, and other social interventions by the probation service. There was also clear evidence that convicted burglars had travelled a very short way to commit their crime, and tended to specialise in a particular type of dwelling. This increased the chances of successful recognition of local burglars if effective Neighbourhood Watch schemes were in operation, acting as a deterrent to the burglars once they realised how the odds in favour of a detection had shortened. This is particularly the case since 70% of entry points were held to be visible from a neighbour's dwelling.

We had information that almost exactly half of the burglaries involved theft of cash from meters, suggesting an approach to burglary prevention by changing methods of payment.

We had indications of the features of dwellings which distinguished victimised and otherwise identical non-victimised households, which could have been used to provide crime prevention advice to householders and the housing department on which repairs and improvements were most vital.

Another range of choices concerned the scope of any initiative. How comprehensive should the range of cover be? Should it extend to the whole estate or single out a group within it characterised by particularly high rates of victimisation? One group on which we were at an early stage tempted to concentrate were households comprising single parents and their children. This was because such family units comprised 8% of all households on the estate (on the basis of the 1981 Census), and 6% in the neighbour sample. In contrast, they comprised 20% of the victimised households.

Any or all of the different approaches could be defended, and we do not claim to have reasonably chosen the best approach. To explain the choice we made, it is necessary to step back and argue what we understand to be the present state of crime prevention knowledge.

Crime Prevention

We think that the evidence for success in well planned and executed crime prevention programmes is extensive to the point of being overwhelming. Apart from the work undertaken within the Home Office, either by the Research and Planning Unit or the Crime Prevention Unit (which will not be reviewed here), there remains a great deal. Some instances follow. Van Straelen (1978) reported a reduction in thefts of gramophone records after a reorganisation which resulted in customers having no direct access to the records. He also reports data from a French supermarket indicating a 33% reduction in losses following the installation of closed-circuit television cameras. Hauber (1978) showed that the incidence of public transport fraud was highest where a self-service system existed, with tickets being sold away from the vehicle, where charges were high and where inspection was infrequent. Kuhlhorn (1980) showed a dramatic drop in the number of cheque frauds as a result of the tightening of cheque guarantee regulations in 1971. In both wine and tobacco industries, thefts of goods in transit plummeted after central organisations concerned with security were established by these industries. In the case of the tobacco industry, the losses in 1978 were reduced to one sixth of the value stolen in 1969, adjusted to 1969 prices (Tobacco Advisory Council Security Liaison Office, personal communication).

One of the most valuable lessons to be learned from this earlier work is that the adoption of a *series* of measures is likely to have much greater impact than simply taking one or two steps. Methodologically this is less attractive because it is scarcely ever practicable to tease out the relative contributions to crime prevention of the various measures, and the interactions between them. A crime prevention package of four elements contains fifteen possible ways of achieving its impact. We were persuaded that a programme involving just one of the changes we had in mind would

be less likely to have an effect than an initiative comprising a package of measures. We realised the cost of this decision. We would remain unable to say precisely how the combination had worked. As long as there was an effect, we would be content! However, we also realised that the package or 'all systems' approach would require more organisation and more coordinated effort by more agencies. It would require the seconded police officer in particular, and the project team to a lesser extent, becoming organisers, managers and coordinators of change. Yet this was very important if a well-conceived initiative, based on sound principles and guided by relevant data, was not to fail because of poor implementation. Hope (1986) has drawn attention to the huge problems of property implementing programmes. One particular burglary prevention project involving an ambitious upgrading of security throughout an estate (Allatt, 1984, 1985) had what some regarded as marginal effects. That marginality could easily be put down to the problems of implementing the programme as envisaged.

Our desire not to fall foul of problems of implementation did not sit easily with our determination to adopt an 'all systems' approach. The problems were made more acute by the short duration of Home Office funding, since we had to have an all systems programme fully implemented by the end of April 1987, when the initial funding ended. This led us to exclude any thoughts of applying a programme across the estate. There remained the decision as to which group or area of the estate would be the target for the initiative.

One alternative was to target a group, chosen because of its vulnerability, with a high rate of victimisation. The group, as previously mentioned, was the single parent family, whose rate of victimisation was over twice what it should have been given the composition of the estate. The particular disadvantage of this strategy was that there was no obvious and unproblematic way of scheduling the programme. Such selection could also have been socially divisive, however justifiable.

Another alternative involved concentration on a sub-area within the Kirkholt estate. This was unacceptable for local political reasons. No area of the estate was an obvious choice. Although there were notable clusters of burglaries, they were spread throughout the estate. It would have been quite arbitrary and again socially divisive to select one area in preference to others.

We also considered the possibility of measures designed to reduce the extent to which particular categories of property were taken. Property marking of videos throughout the estate or the introduction of alternative methods of domestic fuel payment would have been an example of such an approach. We rejected it because we could not introduce the whole package across the estate. Without the comprehensive package we might make some goods unattractive but leave open the possibility that others would be taken.

We decided that the above-mentioned possibilities should be elements in a programme rather than a programme in themselves. Although the machinery for consultation with

members of the community had still to be set up, informal discussions about these alternatives were held frequently with community representatives. In conclusion, in the light of our survey data and practical considerations listed below, we decided to concentrate on those people who had already been burgled.

The selection of prior burglary victims as the target group could bring into play community recourses, notably the Rochdale Victim Support Scheme. Central to the choice was our finding, noted earlier, that the risk of second burglary appeared to be substantially higher than the risk of a first burglary.

An important advantage of the choice of this group was that it made for a method of scheduling the programme to which it would have been difficult to take exception. If, after a burglary, priority was given to help for the victim, this was simply a development of support services to such victims. Victims became identified as such at a fairly steady rate, so implementation could follow at the same rate, simply following the sequence of the burglaries. Responding to each burglary with a number of support measures in this way would also have the effect of affording help to those members of the community who, our data indicate, were most vulnerable to burglary (and anxious about it) in precise proportion to that vulnerability. We were able to assuage our consciences that we were not neglecting single parents and the like after all! Our approach was also consistent with the long-held view in preventive psychiatry that a crisis can serve as the growth point for change.

On these grounds, we were convinced that if we could reduce the rate of multiple victimisations, there would be a case for judging the enterprise successful, even if we failed to reduce the total number of domestic burglaries on the Kirkholt estate.

In the next section, we will set out the elements of the initiative and their justification. There will then follow a section where we describe the processes of implementation. Thereafter we present the results of a preliminary evaluation and attempt to reach some conclusions.

The elements of the initiative

Having thus decided on the strategy, we had to confirm its component elements. These will be described in turn.

Pre-payment fuel meters

The most obvious factor in the burglary profile of the Kirkholt estate was the taking of money from electricity and gas pre-payment meters. The high incidence of this confirms earlier work by the Home Office Crime Prevention Unit (Hill, 1986). On Kirkholt, 49% of burglaries involved the loss of meter cash, and 27% involved the loss of meter cash only. With the removal of pre-payment meters, a reduction in burglaries should be expected.

Before reaching this conclusion, however, we must consider two possibilities. One is that some victims take the opportunity of attributing to a real burglary the cash they themselves took from the meter (on an 'ill wind' principle). The second possibility, frequently voiced by police officers, is that some 'victims' take cash from their own meters and invent a 'burglary' to cover it. The victim interviews convinced us that the rate of such 'do-it-yourself', 'home industry' or 'own goal' events was lower than we had previously been disposed to believe. In discussions at that stage we decided that, whatever the rate of genuine offences, the removal of pre-payment meters was desirable. The argument about do-it-yourself meter thefts did not threaten this part of our initiative. In those cases where people might previously have broken into their own meters, we were not preventing burglary, but an offence was still being prevented by removing the coin pre-payment meter. The worst that could happen would be that some of those who benefited from our protective package would have qualified for that protection by their own offending. Since we could not hope to determine accurately the rate of do-it-yourself meter losses, we decided to proceed on the basis that meter removal would be crime reductive.

If meter 'burglaries' are really household crimes, they are unlikely to be cleared. since there is no burglar and it is difficult in the circumstances of a simulated burglary to prove the householder's offence. That means that if the clearance rate of burglaries involving meter cash is particularly low, this could be accounted for by the offences really being home industry. However, if clearance rates of meter and non-meter burglaries are similar, this would be fairly persuasive that the extent of household crime is slight. During 1986, the clearance rate for burglaries involving meter cash was 13.1%, and for other burglaries 25.6%. The clearance rate for burglaries involving meter cash is therefore about half of what we would expect given the clearance rate for other types of burglary. Assuming that this is due to household crime and that cleared burglaries are representative of all burglaries then it is possible to argue that half of all burglaries involving meter cash were household crime. These D.I.Y. burglaries would be 25% of all burglaries.

Now it should be noted that this estimate leans in the direction of exaggerating the number of such burglaries. This is because the low clearance rate could partially result from other factors, notably reduced probabilities of detection due to police assumptions about home industry and the special anonymity of stolen cash as against stolen property. We therefore believe the true figure lies somewhere between 0% and 25 % with the vast majority of burglaries (at least 75 % and probably more) not being home industry.

The most exacting requirement of this part of our burglary prevention initiative, including the removal of fuel meters therefore, would be that it must reduce burglary by more than 25 % if it is to demonstrate that it has done more than prevent the home industry burglaries involving meter cash.

In sum, what was clear from our survey was that a proportion of burglaries and a number of related, home industry offences, would be reduced by the replacement of

pre-payment fuel meters with alternative methods of payment. The reduction or elimination of pre-payment fuel meters was accordingly selected as an objective in the programme.

Improved Security

It may seem strange that, having been sceptical of the effects of items of security hardware like windowlocks, we should nevertheless include security uprating as one of the planks of our initiative. We feel that security effects are context specific. In other words, particular methods of entry are specific to particular levels of security. When doors can be easily forced, window locks are irrelevant. When no neighbour will come, noise at entry does not have to be minimised. An example of how the effectiveness of security measures is dependent on the context is provided by Sheena Wilson (1978). She showed that estate design features were only effective in crime prevention at particular levels of child density. For the same reason, security hardware may come into its own in particular circumstances, and to neglect this possibility would be foolish. It may be recalled that 93 % of burglars got into the dwelling by the first route they chose. This contrasts with Hough and Mo's (1986) data from the British Crime Survey suggesting that attempted burglaries are prevented from becoming completed burglaries by relevant hardware. When one notes that 60% of the Kirkholt dwellings which were broken into via their windows also had inadequate locks on their doors, this indicates the need for an overall look at security requirements. The primary requirement of the uprating was that it did not consist of token locks and bolts, but that it dealt with real vulnerability as indicated by the entry methods described by burglars and their victims. A second requirement related to the point about context: as the context changed through our initiatives so might modes of entry. The initiative had to be flexible in order to adapt to these changes. The monitoring system was important here. It would be used to identify changes in patterns and methods of burglary.

The key agency for security uprating on Kirkholt was the Council's Housing Department. The Department currently operates experimentally with a decentralised housing management policy. Thus the relevant official is based on the estate. After consultation early in the project, he had held back an application to allocate funds available for security improvement pending the outcome of the first part of our work, so that its use could be the most efficient possible. He accepted our findings and proposals for the strategy of uprating outlined above, and, within the month, had secured the sum of £75,000, spread over three years, to upgrade the security on burgled houses to standards specified by police crime prevention officers. It should also be noted that, under a separate programme (the Priority Estates Project) some of the other houses on the estate not subject to victimisation were also given security uprating. We realised this would serve to mask the effects on multiple victimisation of our project because it would reduce the rate of burglary in other parts of the estate.

Having secured the money, the security uprating programme came into effect on 1st November 1986. With the approval of the Rochdale Police Chief Superintendent, the

local area police officers within days of a burglary being reported would visit the victim and offer to conduct a security survey of the house. Apart from the explicit purpose of the visit, the making of contact was itself regarded as important because in the early interviews, it was found that over 90% of the residents would not recognise their area officer.

The only crime prevention training which area constables had hitherto received was very limited. It was thus felt necessary for them to receive an extra day's intensive training on the specifics of the problems of housing types on Kirkholt. This was supplied by two Rochdale Police Crime Prevention Offices (CPOs). In preparation for this, both CPOs visited the estate, inspected the different types of housing stock, were informed of the findings of the interviews we had carried out, and prepared a 'Security Survey Sheet'. Security hardware to their specification was then stocked by the Housing Department. Part of the intensive day training for area constables was the conduct of pilot surveys of unoccupied houses under the supervision of the two CPOs, to ensure competence in the job. The Housing Department joiner was also contacted, and the correct method of fitting the hardware was explained to him.

At the risk of sounding immodest, we think the injection of additional training and advice is worthy of emulation. It ensures area constables make contact with victims in the area they serve. It also ensures that area constables can give sound crime prevention advice in the small areas for which they are responsible. It routinises the provision of relevant security and it involves the joiner in the process.

Community Support Team

During the interviews of both the victims and their neighbours feelings of suspicion were expressed on many occasions towards each other and about residents of Kirkholt in general. Yet we had also found there was a large amount of latent support for community-based crime prevention initiatives. It was necessary to mobilise this support by approaching people again and eliciting their cooperation. To this end, we decided a small team was needed to engage in direct community action. This led us to the local authority's Manpower Services Commission agency in Rochdale. Earlier contact with them had established that ideas were being sought under the Community Programme with the object of crime prevention. The Kirkholt project excited their interest. In October 1986 application was made to them for eleven community 'self-help' workers. This number included a supervisor and a deputy supervisor. The application was approved in January 1987. By March 1st six of the eleven posts had been filled (including both supervisory posts). Initially this was adequate for our purposes. After an initial week's training which reflected the multi-agency approach to crime prevention, this part of the project went 'live'. The primary role of these workers was to visit the victims of burglary on the estate, offer support, and put them in touch with appropriate agencies. It was obviously courteous to obtain agreement for this from the Rochdale Victims Support Scheme. We had already had consultations with the scheme's coordinator. Not only was agreement forthcoming, but they also became actively involved in the recruitment and training of the workers. Indeed one of

their volunteers was by good fortune eligible for employment on the scheme and was selected as the team supervisor.

The second role of workers was to take on the security surveys previously conducted by the area constable, together with post-coding of valuables. Following this, providing the victim agreed, came the attempt to seek the support of neighbours surrounding the victim to work together in a 'mini' or 'cocoon' neighbourhood watch. The postcoding service and security survey was also offered to neighbours approached in connection with the cocoon neighbourhood watch. At the time of writing, a total of 143 victims have been contacted by the team, of whom none has declined the security survey. 38 % have declined the postcoding offers. Three victims stated they would prefer it if their neighbours were not approached to provide the cocoon. Of course these wishes were honoured and no approach made. Where an approach to neighbours was made, 85 % agreed to cooperate. Interestingly, slightly more neighbours than victims took up the postcoding offer. To continue to build upon the data base developed from the initial victim and neighbour interviews, the self-help workers have also interviewed every victim and their neighbours where this was agreed. For this purpose abridged questionnaires were used which helped towards the monitoring of the project, to be discussed below.

Although the setting up of this part of the initiative went relatively smoothly two points of interest did emerge. First, as the collection of data is part of crime analysis, NALGO, the union representing many civilian employees of the Greater Manchester Police, needed to be assured that the scheme was not taking work away from their members. Second, because the job of self-help worker involved visiting people's homes, selected applicants had to meet a stringent set of standards of trustworthiness and ability to communicate. Many were rejected, and in consequence the scheme started with just over half its complement of workers, although the remaining posts were filled during the following weeks.

Cocoon neighbourhood watch

There were two reasons for our attraction to this idea. The first, and central one is that it mirrors what happens in well-established communities, where close groupings of dwellings share information and support each other. This contrasts with the larger type of neighbourhood watch schemes, which cleave to no particular social and geographic boundaries, and are started with no particular event as trigger. Second, we felt at the start that the cocoons may form the beginnings of some organic development, and would grow into home watch schemes. Seven months on, this has happened. Seventy-five home watch schemes on the estate have now been registered with the police. An indicator of the extent of the enthusiasm for such schemes is the fact that Kirkholt Community Centre is now being used to host meetings, since individual houses have proved too small to hold the numbers of people wishing to attend.

Setting up a monitoring system and evaluation

Having gathered a wealth of data early in the project, the choice of what and how to monitor was easier than it might have been, particularly as we could use modified versions of the interview schedules developed during the pre-initiative phase. Four information sources contribute to monitoring. These are:

- (i) The Police crime report
- (ii) Security survey sheet
- (iii) Victim questionnaire completed by project worker
- (iv) Neighbour questionnaire completed by project worker

Information from each of these sources is passed to an information coordinator working in the Rochdale probation office. The information coordinator, appointed by the Selcare Trust under an MSC Community Programme scheme, inputs the data onto a personal computer. The data can be manipulated in a variety of ways to illuminate changing patterns of burglary on the estate. Since the comparable pre-implementation data is readily accessible, before-after implementation comparisons can easily be made.

Having the monitoring system in place means that we do not have to rely solely upon immediate reductions in burglary rates as an index of the project's success. Whatever the trend, the system also enables us to explore qualitative changes in the burglaries during the course of the initiative. Has the modus operandi altered? Have burglars found a way past the more secure access points? Are they going for different types of property? Such information will provide the necessary flexibility and enable the thrust of the initiative's components to be changed to meet the changing pattern. As long as the system can pinpoint remedial action to be taken, the initiative will be adaptable.

The assessment of success

There are three levels at which we hoped for success:

- (a) the actual implementation of a set of measures coupled with a facility for monitoring them;
- (b) the prevention of multiple/repeat victimisations (i.e. second or subsequent burglaries on previous victims would become less common on Kirkholt than they were before the project started);
- (c) a reduction in burglary across the estate.

The relationship between the prevention of multiple victimisation and the prevention of burglary more generally is a complex one and this needs to be spelled out. For purposes of evaluation (as opposed to policy), it would be ideal if multiple victimisation was reduced without a more general reduction in burglary. This is because the initiative is focussed on those who have already fallen victim to burglary.

If those who had been protected to a greater extent than other people, proved less vulnerable as a consequence then this would provide the most focussed and persuasive evidence of the effectiveness of the initiative. However, this ideal is unlikely to be achieved for a number of reasons. Several of the measures offered protection both to victim and to other neighbouring households. For instance, cocoon neighbourhood watch includes all the participating households under the same strategy. Thus a general reduction in burglary on the estate could be expected. It is against this background of a probable falling rate of burglary that the effect of the measures to reduce repeat victimisation would have to be assessed. Since the rate of second victimisations (among households who have already been burgled) is in fact higher than the rate of first victimisations (among households who have not yet been burgled), the reduction in second burglaries would have to be in absolute terms much greater than the reduction in first burglaries to represent a similar proportional decrease. Because the prevention package 'leaks' into the community generally, this obviously becomes more difficult. As the probability of a first burglary declines, the *a priori* probability of two burglaries declines as its square. The arithmetic of this is worth elaborating on. If one house in four is burgled, then the rough probability of a house suffering two burglaries is one in sixteen (.25). If one house in ten is burgled once, then one in one hundred will be burgled twice (.10²). Note that the change in the probability of two victimisations changes much more dramatically than the change in the probability of one. In short, the odds are stacked heavily against showing an effect particular to multi-victims distinguishable from the reduction of multi-victimisation expected on the basis of chance.

While the 'leakage' of prevention measures into the estate generally may be a bad thing for our evaluation, it is a good thing for burglary prevention. If we can show that focussing on victims can have a general effect in an area, this may form an appealing approach to crime prevention generally. It responds to victimisation, in itself a good thing in terms of victim support, but it does so with hope and confidence of making a more general crime reductive impact.

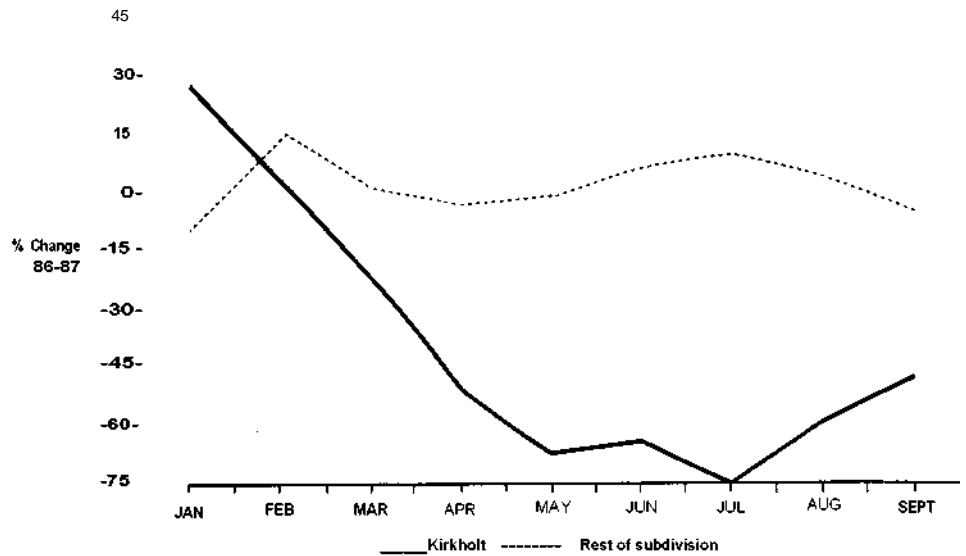
Results

Reduction in overall levels of burglary

First we need to establish whether burglaries on the Kirkholt estate generally declined in 1987 by comparison with 1986 and to examine whether a similar reduction occurred with the remainder of the sub-division over that time period. In absolute terms, burglary on Kirkholt fell from 316 in 1986 to 147 in 1987 (comparing January to September each year). Figure 1 supplies the data as percentages. It is clear that on Kirkholt there has been a large absolute and proportionate reduction in domestic burglary during the initiative. In contrast, the data for the rest of the sub-division show a slight movement in the upward direction. Moreover, the month by month changes do not give any indication of mirror-image movement of the curves suggesting displacement of domestic burglary from Kirkholt to elsewhere in the immediate area.

Indeed, the area closest to Kirkholt, Ashfield Valley, itself- shows something of a decline in burglary, albeit less dramatic than is the case for Kirkholt. Interpretation of this, and even more of repeat burglary victimisations on the Ashfield Valley estate, is confused by substantial occupancy changes within that estate, i.e. by people moving within Ashfield Valley as part of housing policy in preparation for improvement.

**Figure 1: Change in burglary rate 1986-1987 (%).
Comparison of Kirkholt with rest of sub-division**



Note: 1 - Kirkholt (January 1986 = 51 cases)
2- Rest of sub-division (January 1986 = 308 cases)
3- Source: police crime reports

Data from police records on changes in other offences as between Kirkholt and the rest of the sub-division are presented as Table 2, again covering the period January to September in each year. The classification merits a little explanation, 'Woundings' encompass all recorded assaultive crime. 'Minor damage' does not feature in official statistics of crimes known to the police, but may reflect damage inflicted in an attempt to burgle. Acquisitive crime lumps together all other crime (with the numerically trivial exception of fraud) which will have been carried out for profit. It is clear that, for both assaults and acquisitive crime, the rate of offending on Kirkholt has dropped relative to the rest of the sub-division. In contrast, the rate of damage has gone up. Of all kinds of displacement, that from domestic burglary to criminal damage is the least plausible, on the basis of motivation for the two offence types. If you want money or goods, you do not turn to criminal damage as an alternative way of getting them. We think what is happening is that pride in the estate, and confidence that the police will do something when asked, has increased the rate of report of offences of criminal damage. It may further be that some of the incidents of damage reflect failed burglaries. Apart from the untenable view that burglaries are displaced to damage rather than to other acquisitive crime on the estate, the only other interpretation which would damage our position is that in which there is displacement to acquisitive crime

other than domestic burglary outside the estate. In other words, the possibility exists that the Kirkholt burglar *both* gives up burglary and simultaneously moves his offending off the estate. We cannot discount this possibility, but we find it implausible. There was no suggestion of a local initiative on burglary outside the Kirkholt estate, to dissuade the commission of burglaries elsewhere. It is easier to conceive of a movement to domestic burglary off the estate or to other acquisitive crime within the estate. No evidence exists for either of these alternatives. To restate, there is a general burglary reduction on the Kirkholt estate coinciding with the period of the initiative. Its extent is massive and there is no evidence of obvious displacement either to burglary elsewhere in the relevant police subdivision, or to other offences on the Kirkholt estate itself. In terms of risk per house the massive reduction can be expressed as having reduced from 1 in 4 houses being burgled on Kirkholt during 1986 to less than 1 in 8 in 1987.

Table 2: Comparison of offences on Kirkholt and in other parts of the sub-division, 1986-7. Figures exclude domestic burglary.

	Kirkholt			Sub-Division Excluding Kirkholt		
	1986	1987	% Change	1986	1987	% Change
Woundings	24	19	-21	233	270	+16
Criminal damage	81	98	+21	1031	940	-9
Minor damage	131	148	+13	808	835	+3
Acquisitive	288	313	+9	4690	5810	+24
Total	524	578	+10	6762	7855	+16

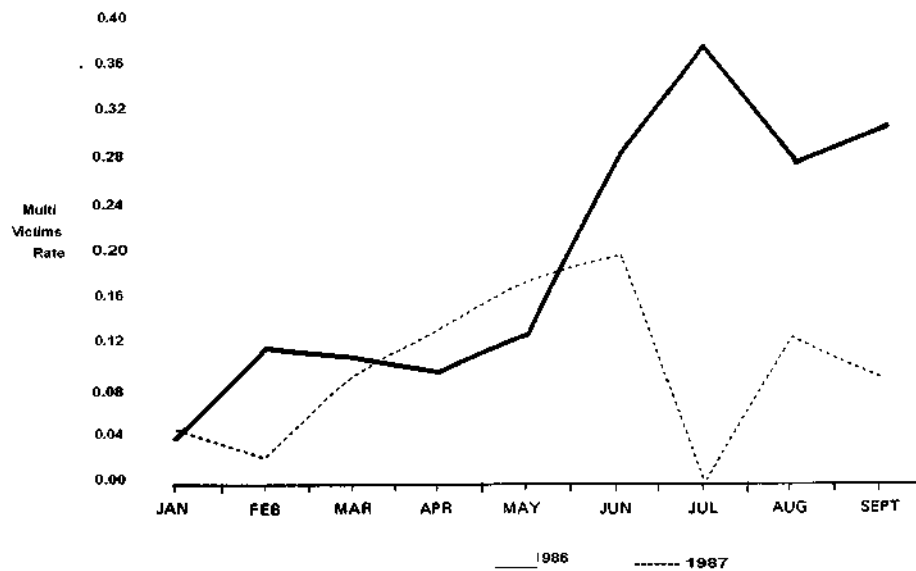
There can be major fluctuations in the rates of particular crimes in particular areas at particular times. There will be a variety of reasons for such fluctuations. The reduction of domestic burglary on the Kirkholt estate coinciding precisely with our initiative provides only suggestive evidence that the initiative caused the drop. However we cannot find any alternative explanation for the reduction. What is more important is the reduction in multiple victimisations as the prevention of these was the main thrust of our initiatives. It is to a discussion of our success in this area that we now turn.

Reduction in multiple victimisation

To demonstrate this achievement we have adopted two approaches. The first approach was to count the total number of burglary victims in each month during 1986 and 1987. From each monthly total we identified those people who had been burgled previously during that calendar year. We then expressed this number as a proportion of the total victims for that month. For example, during February 1986 59 households were burgled. Of these, 7 households had been burgled already during 1986. This

gives the proportion of multiple victims for February 1986 of .12. For successive months of the year, we would expect the proportion to rise simply because of the greater time period available for repeat burglaries to occur (in March, for example, repeats could occur to households first burgled in January, February and March). Figure 2 compares 1986 and 1987. It clearly shows this expected rise during 1986, and a continuation of the trend until May 1987, but a sharp *decline* thereafter. some two months after the start of the full preventive initiative in March.

Figure 2: Second or subsequent burglary victimisations as a proportion of all burglaries on Kirkholt

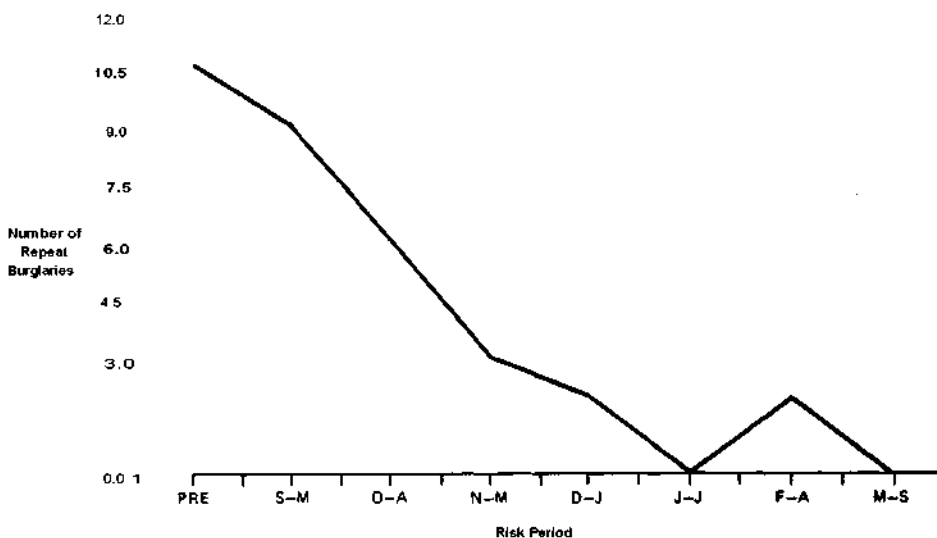


Note: 1 - The full initiative commenced March 1987.
 2- 'Multi victims rate' means the number of houses burgled each month that had been burgled previously during the same calendar year, divided by the monthly total.
 3- Source: police crime reports.

Although this shows the contrast between the pre-implementation year and the seven months of our initiative, it does not give any indication of the absolute change in the number of repeat burglaries in 1987. For this we address the second approach, the relevant data for which are presented as Figure 3. To explain how this was constructed we need to recognise that the initiative had only been operating fully for 7 months, from March 1987 to September 1987 when this report was prepared. The implication of this is that for the purposes of comparison the longest post implementation time period we could possibly use was 7 months. We therefore calculated how many victims during the month of September 1987 had been burgled previously since the beginning of March 1987. This is indicated at point M-S on the extreme right of the Risk Period axis for Figure 3. We then worked back to the next month, i.e. August 1987 and calculated how many victims of burglary that month had been burgled in the previous 7 months, i.e. between February 1987 and August 1987. (F-A on the Risk Period axis.) We continued to calculate the number of repeat victimisations in this way

until we reached the 7 month period September 1986 to March 1987. (S-M). For all the 7 month periods prior to that we calculated them back as far as the period to January 1986 and obtained an average of those period totals. This is shown as 'pre' on the Risk Period axis. Once again there is a clear decline in the number of repeat victimisations post implementation. Is this more or less than one should anticipate on the basis of change in the first time burglary rate? To put the matter in concrete terms, taking seven month risk periods, what reduction do we need from the pre-implementation period to the period March-September 1987 just to keep in step with the reduction in expected repeat victimisation? In effect we need a reduction to a level of 27 % of the pre-implementation rate just to stay abreast of expectation! When we compared the number of repeat victimisations during the last pre-implementation seven-month period with the seven-month period wholly covered by the initiative, we found that multiple burglaries had been suffered by 41 households in the former pre-implementation period whereas only 8 had been suffered in the latter, initiative period, a reduction of more than 80%. The first indication of success in tackling multiple victimisation over and above achieving a general decline in burglary on Kirkholt.

**Figure 3: Number of repeat burglary victims on Kirkholt
(Seven month risk period)**



Note: 1 - 'Repeat Burglaries' are defined as second or subsequent burglaries to houses, with both the first and subsequent burglaries occurring within the risk period.
 2- 'Risk period' means a seven month time period i.e.g. S-M is the period September 1986 to March 1987.
 3- Source: police crime reports.

The most stringent test however that we could apply to our decline in repeat victimisations involved the comparison with another area in the Rochdale police division with a rate of burglary decline similar to that of Kirkholt, as pointed out by the local police command. We observed earlier that crime decline can occur for a

variety of reasons. Evidence that it was our initiative which produced the effect on Kirkholt would in our view be conclusive if repeat victimisations declined more on Kirkholt than in the other area with a dramatic burglary decline. Demonstrating this is especially difficult since the comparison area (Langley) started off with a much lower rate of burglary. Specifically, there had to be three less repeat burglaries on Kirkholt for every one less on Langley, just for the reductions to be equivalent in proportional terms. A fuller description of the analysis is presented as Appendix B. Suffice it to say here that there is a significant correlation between time and the ratio of actual to expected repeat victimisations in Kirkholt, and that the equivalent correlation for the Langley area, although it shows a similar pattern, is distinctly smaller, and not significant. Thus, there is some suggestion that the reduction in the rate of repeat victimisation on Kirkholt is outstripping the reduction in the rate expected from the *general* decline in victimisation, and that this is not true to a statistically significant extent for Langley. In short, even in the most stringent test possible, there is some suggestive evidence for the effects of the particular focus of the Kirkholt initiative. This should not be overstated, but given the intrinsic difficulty of success in these terms, it is surprising in itself.

The monitoring system which we have described will continue to record this relevant data for subsequent months and further funding will now make it possible for a longer term evaluation to be undertaken and subsequently reported on.

Conclusions, constraints and recommendations

What has been demonstrated?

We should first stake a claim as to what has been achieved. On Kirkholt. *early* experience is most encouraging. A number of interrelated initiatives have been successfully implemented on an interagency basis:

- (i) upgrading of household security
- (ii) property postcoding
- (iii) removal of gas and electric *cash* pre-payment meters
- (iv) cocoon neighbourhood watch
- (v) home watch
- (vi) setting up a computerised monitoring and evaluation system.

Following implementation, a dramatic reduction in overall levels of burglary has been achieved, and the reduction in the rate of repeat victimisations outstrips the reduction expected on the basis of the lower rate of burglary generally. A monitoring system is in place which will allow flexibility of response to changing burglary patterns on the estate. In addition a system of consultation, through the setting up of a crime prevention group with the community has at the time of writing just been set up to direct efforts to other offence's on the estate in response to expressed need. In essence, we believe that an inter-agency base has been established for crime prevention based

upon repeat victimisation. It has been demonstrated that once a household is burgled, it is more likely to be burgled again. This is, in our view, of fundamental importance for burglary prevention strategy, and should be of particular interest to insurance companies, town planners and housing departments. It has been demonstrated that a strategy based on the prevention of repeat burglaries is viable and makes good sense. Such offences represent a significant proportion of all domestic burglary nationally. The strategy is attractive in offering protection to the most vulnerable.

We are ready to be surprised by the development of crime prevention on Kirkholt. It will not be mechanical, but organic. Working relationships and new lines of communication will ensure this. The Kirkholt project feels more like horticulture than engineering! In what follows, we will make comment based on experience of the scheme, and how crime prevention initiatives might best thrive.

(a) The need for resource allocation

In the commercial world new products are seldom developed cheaply. The successful innovation which increases a company's share value compensates for the many expensive attempts which lead nowhere. Crime prevention initiatives may be thought of in a similar way. Support must extend beyond the application of an initiative, but to the early stages of data gathering and analysis which are necessary to the proper establishment, and subsequently the proper evaluation, of a project. Unless there is such a phase, no-one will ever know whether a project has prevented crime: perhaps more importantly, no-one will ever know what to modify to enhance a project's chances of success. An analogy (only and analogy) may be made with the children's game of 'Blind Man's Buff'. When played properly, the blindfolded player is told "Warmer" or "Colder" until she or he succeeds in touching the target person. A proper data base serves a similar function in a crime prevention monitoring system. Until one knows whether one is warmer or colder (more attempts for every completion, change in entry point, change in method of entry) one cannot know what to change to get closer to the objective. Setting up a crime prevention initiative without such a data base is like playing "Blind Man's Buff" where the only thing you are allowed to say is 'touching' 'not touching'. If you are not touching (i.e. have not apparently prevented crime) you do not know which way to go to get warmer!

In our project we were fortunate to be supported by Home Office funding and to have the unqualified support of two important local agencies, the police and probation services. The Greater Manchester Police responded to the initial proposal by releasing an Inspector to work full-time with the two Manchester University-based people involved in the project, and their research assistant. On the other hand, the Greater Manchester Probation Service initially attempted to incorporate work on the project (in the initial stage the interviewing of burglars) within the existing workload of staff in Rochdale and Middleton probation offices. However at a very early stage in the project the Assistant Chief Probation Officer in the area wrote to the project team expressing his anxieties about overloading his staff in this way. To complete the target number of burglar interviews would, he estimated, require each officer "spending as

much as 30 hours during the six months on this work (this includes training, gaining consent, travelling, interviews and waiting time). " Subsequently, the Probation Service made additional resources available to the project. In the first instance, this was the designation of one part-time officer to carry out the interviews. Latterly, one officer appointed to a specialist post within the Rochdale sub-division came to spend 20% of his time on the Kirkholt project. When the pairing of police and probation officer came into play, we realised what we had been missing. It was often noted that the two services making common cause in crime prevention made a considerable impression on public meetings. No doubt in part because of the personalities of the people involved, a wholly constructive set of working relationships came to be established. Given that the Greater Manchester Probation Service was in at the beginning of the scheme, and given that its commitment to the scheme was never in question, it is regrettable that this report is probably more police than probation oriented (which is reflected in its authorship). This is wholly and unintentionally a product of early working arrangements. In the development of the Kirkholt initiative in the phase after this report, the more equal partnership which is now in place will be more fully evident.

(b) The need for a support structure

One of the unintended consequences of how the Kirkholt project was resourced is that the staff seconded to it had a tendency to become marginalised in their own organisations. One aspect of this is that because something becomes the specialist responsibility of someone, other practitioners regard it as peripheral to their work. This is unfortunate for any initiative; it is particularly fatal in one whose focus is crime prevention. One of the aims of this project, in common with other recent ones, is to reflect the purposes of Home Office Circular 8/84. According to this, the level of responsibility and influence is to be pushed down the organisation's hierarchy and into the community itself. To attempt this while distanced from mainstream police and probation work would be disastrous. Yet because the initiative may require the collection of data concerning existing practices and their effectiveness - as ours did - those seconded may be perceived with indifference or antipathy by those in the rest of each organisation involved whose work thereby comes under scrutiny. The consequences of this will depend in part on the calibre of the people seconded, the degree of their personal commitment to the project, their resolution and strength of character to challenge established practices and unfounded assumptions of some of higher status within their organisation. However, structural factors are important too. We set out below the kind of support structure needed to avoid the undesirable effects alluded to above.

1. Regular meetings of the project team. The two University-based investigators, their research assistant, the seconded police officer and, at a later stage, seconded officers of the probation service and their immediate supervisor within the probation service met fortnightly throughout the project. The meetings were formal, with an agenda and minutes taken. These meetings proved to be invaluable, to head off problems and to renew expressions of commitment to the project.

2. *An institutional base.* The seconded police and probation officers were assisted by having a position within their own organisations which allowed direct links with the highest echelons where necessary. Increasingly the benefits of such an arrangement became evident. In the case of the Probation Service, the regular attendance of a senior probation officer at the project team meetings improved the flow of communication (after an unhappy start) and ensured that top management in the local area and in the service generally were kept in touch with developments and any problems arising from them which required their intervention. More recently, a representative of Chief Officer rank has come to be involved in these meetings.

In the case of the seconded police officer, his attachment to a department of the force which had a Chief Superintendent at its head, and a chain of command parallel with that of a territorial division, has both prevented isolation and guaranteed some necessary independence from the command structure of the Rochdale division. Although a great deal obviously depends upon the commitment of senior ranks to an initiative such as ours, the fact remains that there are distinct advantages in the seconded officers having a clear departmental base.

(c) The need to involve local personnel

It would be misleading to suggest that the project was immediately welcomed by all local police and probation officers. The fact that the survey meant that a third party was visiting victims of crime and their neighbours and taking details that could be matched against (contrasted with?) official reports, caused suspicion. More threatening still were the questions about police response to burglaries and the satisfaction or otherwise of victim expectations. ,

The literature on police work shows that police officers place a high premium on the discretion they exercise and adopt practices designed to maintain the positions of low visibility from which their decisions are taken. The data collection threatened these strategies by providing an alternative source of information on police practices and service delivery. Although the interviews were carried out by a police officer, he was asking questions which are traditionally 'unaskable', and this served to increase his perceived marginality.

Another difficulty encountered in involving operational officers from both services (outside the research team) was their modest appreciation of crime prevention principles and practice. Within both services there seems to be an underestimation of the possible benefits of crime prevention initiatives and cynicism about the advantages of collaboration across agencies. This may be changing, and is not intended to represent the position of those of Chief Officer rank with whom we were involved, nor of the officers whose commitment made the project possible.

There may be in some parts of the organisations scepticism about the benefits of successful crime prevention for the organisation. We have heard the view of some senior police officers that the manpower establishment of their divisions is in part

determined by the volume of reported crime. Thus successful crime prevention would reduce the police establishment in those divisions in which it occurred. More generally, it is held by some that those who wish to see a reduction in the size of the police service would use the success of crime prevention initiatives as a means of arguing for such a reduction or reallocation of resources.

In response to these fears we would repeat our earlier point that crime prevention initiatives are time-consuming and expensive in personnel to implement. This must be recognised. Collection and analysis of management information to monitor crime patterns, design measures and then to adjust to the changing nature of crime necessitates much work. As crime prevention initiatives make an impact, reducing the demand on strained resources will make possible the improvement in the quality of policing, for instance in the investigation of the remaining crime and the servicing of other areas of public demand. A reduction in crime must not be used as an argument for reducing police strength.

As for probation resistance, some of this must have stemmed from the additional work required in the early days of the project. Other factors also inhibit collaboration. Most management in the probation service and some social work teachers have attempted in recent years to focus probation concern on offences, but the dominant focus remains the offender. Probation officers also tend to be properly concerned about confidentiality and what some perceive to be the enforcement bias of crime prevention programmes. They question how their clients are helped if the latter provide information on how and why they commit offences, particularly if that information becomes available to the police. Will it simply increase an offender's chances of detection later? Will it assist the officer in working with clients and how?

We cannot claim to have wholly overcome the problems described. However we think we have benefitted from our experience of them, and note that experience for what it is worth. The institutional base described above enabled the seconded police officer to ensure that policy relevant findings from victim and neighbour surveys were fed into the police organisation swiftly and appropriately. Soon after this, one of the University-based workers accompanied the seconded officer to a meeting with the divisional commander of the Rochdale division to elicit his continuing support. While he expressed some reservations about the survey findings and about the initiative in general he was prepared to continue his support for it and agreed to three area constables on Kirkholt carrying out the security surveys on the homes of burglary victims on the estate. The involvement of the crime prevention department locally and the three area constables on the Kirkholt estate in the implementation of the initiative has led to the sharing of ownership of the project with people at grass roots level. This, as noted earlier, is the direction we want the project to take.

The need for training programmes to fill in the information gap about crime prevention initiatives led the seconded police officer to address Inspectors' Development courses at the Greater Manchester Police training school. These are designed to increase awareness of the potential benefits of crime prevention and to overcome resistance

based on inadequate information. The question of the emphasis which should be given to crime prevention on social workers' training courses (particularly for probation students) is worthy of further consideration. The Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work may be interested in developing this possibility.

(d) Retaining the principle of community involvement

It has been important repeatedly to remind ourselves of the basic decision that, having nurtured the fledgeling initiative, the statutory agencies will require it to take wing on its own. More recently, tenants have taken an increasing role in its management and direction. There will always be a place for a support service, but community ownership of the scheme, and its further development, is the outcome to which we aspire.

Postscript

1. As previously indicated, the evaluation described above only covers the seven month period after initiative implementation which took us to September 1987. During that period a significant reduction in burglary victimisation occurred. At the time of this publication going to print, some eleven months after initiative implementation, we can report that recorded burglary victimisation has reduced by some 262 cases as compared with the same time period one year earlier. As time passes however this reduction looks set to be even greater. For example in January 1987 64 cases of burglary were recorded whereas in January 1988 there were only 10.

2. Whether the preventive momentum can be sustained and rates of burglary pegged at the existing level (or reduced even more) will be examined further. To assist in the evaluation of the long term effects the project has secured additional funding from the Home Office to complete a further two years of development and evaluation. During this second phase, in addition to maintaining what has been created, the project will aim to develop additional offender/community initiatives, focusing on the drugs, alcohol, unemployment and debt problems revealed in the offender interviews, as a way of complementing the hardening of targets, and the surveillance afforded by the cocoon neighbourhood watch and home watch schemes. To aid this development the Greater Manchester Probation Service, in October 1987, seconded a probation officer to work full time with the project from an office situated on the Kirkholt estate. It is anticipated that a report on this second phase of the project (which will include a cost/benefit analysis) will be published towards the end of 1989. It is hoped that this two-pronged approach - reducing the motivation to burgle whilst making burglary harder to commit - will have an especially powerful impact which is both long-lasting and unlikely to engender much displacement.

Appendix A

Guidelines for Neighbour Selection

*UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION*

BURGLARY PREVENTION DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

CHECKLIST OF CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION OF RESPONDENT FOR NEIGHBOUR SCHEDULE'

1. If victims' house is 'mid-terrace' select either neighbour randomly.
2. If 'end-terrace', interview neighbour in adjoining terrace.
3. If 'semi-detached', interview neighbour in adjoining semi-detached house.
4. If 'detached', select neighbour randomly unless clear difference in design or location, in which case select nearest equivalent.
5. If flat (Systems/Balcony Model), 'end-balcony' select adjoining dwelling. If flat 'mid-balcony' select either neighbour randomly.
6. If flat (1 flat per floor model), select flat immediately below.
7. If flat (ground floor) select nearest neighbour, select randomly if two.
8. If flat (semi-detached 4 unit-model). select opposite flat on the same floor.

Appendix B

The Comparison between Langley and Kirkholt Estates

Two approaches were adopted, a straight comparison between pre and post-implementation phases on the two estates, and an analysis of the trend during the introduction of the programme. For the former, the mean frequency of households suffering burglaries 1, 2, 3 or 4 times in the eight overlapping seven month periods between January 1986 and February 1987 (the pre-implementation phase) was calculated for each estate. These data should fit the Poisson distribution. Expected frequencies were calculated on this basis. Observed and expected frequencies were calculated for the post-implementation seven month period. (The analyses to be described were run both on these data and on the data converted from households suffering burglary, to burglary *events*. The results did not differ in any important way and results from only one form of the analysis will be discussed.) In this analysis expected frequencies were considered as *data*. One can conceive of the data as a four-way contingency table with two levels of each factor: time (pre- and post-implementation), estate (Langley and Kirkholt), victimisation (single or repeat) and 'reality' (observed and expected). Thus depicted, the data allow a single test of the hypothesis that repeat victimisations have changed disproportionately to expectation according to estate and time. The crucial comparison was the four term interaction effect in log-linear analysis of the contingency table. In the event, G^2 failed to reach an acceptable standard of significance, although by inspection the data tended in the desired direction. For reasons rehearsed in the text, this is not surprising. However, another way of looking at the data, one which makes use of more of the data from the implementation phase, was next attempted. In this analysis, seven month risk periods were studied, from the one ending in February 1987 to the one ending in September 1987. For each of the seven-month periods, the ratio of expected to observed repeat victimisations was calculated for each estate. Thus for each time period and each estate, one could see achieved relative to expected rates of repeat burglary. If the initiative on Kirkholt were progressively making a particular impact on repeat burglary, this proportion should reduce. By Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, it does. ($r=.79$, $p .05$). For Langley, while the correlation is substantial, it fails to reach statistical significance ($r=.66$, ns).

One interesting point which emerges from the analysis is that, on the Langley estate, while not to a statistically reliable extent, the reduction in burglary might be disproportionately benefiting repeat victims. It merits a separate piece of research to establish the circumstances in which major changes in crime rates, up or down, do or do not particularly benefit potential repeat victims. This would substantially clarify the dynamics of crime prevention programmes.

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