

Burglary & Security Conference

Wednesday, 21st January 2015
Galleries of Justice Museum, Nottingham

Round Table Discussion Outcomes

1. How do we use this research to better inform practice?

When disseminating messages from the research:

- Make the messages simple and in plain English, and suitable for a variety of audiences
- Previous victims and repeat victims should be a particular target audience
- Keep them in a central repository (see below)
- There is a demand for research findings in police forces
- Find or establish a 'What Works' or research contact within each force
- Make use of a 'Clunk-Click' type catchphrase e.g. 'Give Burglary a WIDE Berth' (from Ian King from Warwickshire) – to make it easy to remember for adults and children, who can help remind householders. There was also a suggestion of the creation of a 'junior Neighbourhood Watch'
- There is a need to get over complacency of people not using or installing security measures, but not to increase the fear of crime
- Note the limitations of the data – especially regarding burglar alarms
- Provide practical advice on types of doors and locks (and alarms?)

There needs to be a national level lead on issues, to ensure or encourage political will – Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) / College of Policing / politicians / civil service – as staff and their agendas can change as staff move on. For example Police and Crime Commissioner agendas will change post elections.

Findings should be shared with ACPO National Burglary Group, the Chartered Institutes of Housing and Environmental Health.

This needs to be done before messages are disseminated to the public, so there is agreed support for them.

Landlords should be made aware of the findings – as potentially they could be used as tribunal evidence against landlord.

Undertake further, perhaps qualitative research into who those in the Nottingham Operation Packwood pilot didn't choose to take up the offer of security assessments and improvements

Note: insurance companies don't see burglary as as much of a risk as fire or flood and do don't reduce premiums by much if security is in place – this research could inform a change in this

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2. Practicalities of implementation

There is a need to consider:

- Why an intervention has worked
- Note that the culture of the police service is changing, it is becoming less regimented with more communication between ranks – it is therefore more receptive to research messages
- Focussing on small changes that can easily be made

3. How do we better raise awareness?

Access to the data needs to be easy e.g. a College of Policing equivalent of a Moodle (used in Universities to provide content to students) type interface

The content should be organised by issue / problem, not by the solution with a brief overview with the ability to drill down further in to details / research

The move within publishing to open access may help more information available

Encourage take up of undergraduate and masters degrees - for example the promotion structure for Superintendents could involve a requirement to show how they have generated or used new knowledge (like that for consultants in medicine).

Allow for Continuing Professional Development / training days within police forces including crime prevention officers – make sure the content is up to date and consistent

Make use of local community contacts such as Neighbourhood Watch to spread messages, so it is not just left to the police.

4. How do we avoid duplicate efforts to reduce burglary and make effective use of limited resources?

Ensure strong partnerships are in place – such as the Crime and Drugs Partnership in Nottingham – and personal networks are used. For example it was noted that the police don't always know what powers partners, such as Environmental Health have. These partnerships need to be publicised in a local area.

It was noted that Neighbourhood Watch are sponsored by Avocet Hardware (designers and distributors of door, window and other security) and that the Metropolitan police is receiving some funding from Chubb Fire and Security – need to be aware of these.

5. How do you explain the counter intuitive effects of burglary alarms?

It should be noted that the historical data shows that alarms were previously effective, so the key is looking at what changed and why.

Need for more research, but some ideas include:

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- Lack of police response / attendance
- Desensitisation to alarms and noise – could a different tone be of use? This means that neighbours are less likely to check on an alarm, which in turn may mean offenders see them as less of a risk to being caught. Indeed some research has shown that offenders will make an assessment of the likely quality of an alarm and are not necessarily put off by one.
- Alarms not used / turned on – unless people going away on holiday, perhaps especially in rented or student properties, which could be old or broken.
- Confusion due to a choice of alarms
- Are they more appropriate for certain properties / households.

Could there be an argument for the police (or other agencies) to collect more detailed information on burglary targets and victims e.g. housing type etc.

Need to be careful about how this is publicised, as it could be countered or buried by alarm company PR – they need to be brought onside with WIDE and how they can complement it. In addition, it should be communicated that householders should not rely on only one security measure, but instead a range, as in WIDE.

6. How do you explain findings that suggest that social renters have higher risk of burglary than private renters despite the presence of effective security to similar levels?

Some ideas included:

- Social housing is more concentrated and at a higher density, unlike private rented accommodation, and could be at greater risk due to the short distance travelled by burglars
- Social renters could be more likely to have young families and so leave doors and window unsecured
- Social renters are likely to have a lack of guardianship and social cohesion
- The housing type and style is likely to be similar, so once one has been burgled, offenders will know the layout of the rest

It was noted that in one way this was perhaps counter intuitive, due to the requirements of the Decent Homes Standard for the social sector (Housing Act 2004), which is not mirrored in the private sector, which should mean security measures were of a better standard. However, perhaps private renters take on a greater responsibility themselves.

Contents insurance may not be taken up by social sector residents – if this behaviour could be changed it would help.

7. Items for consideration/issues/barriers

There is a need to consider the balance of budgets between pre crime / crime prevention teams and Neighbourhood Policing Teams / patrol teams and to note that WIDE will have a cost implication.

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Whilst the WIDE combination is cheaper than other alternatives, there is still a cost implication, especially if replacing doors and windows (see Nottingham / Operation Packwood pilot) – this could be a barrier to implementation for some residents or organisations.

Need to balance changing public behaviour with interventions – people need to be encouraged / incentivised to change their behaviour, as they can be complacent about risk

8. What should be our focus for action going forward?

The consistent proportion of 5% of households who have no security measures in place – who are they, how can they be engaged.

Provide the findings on WIDE to political leaders (as a partnership) in advance of elections to inform manifestos, and post the election, reinforce these messages.

It was noted that the University of Nottingham will, as a result of the conference, check if something like WIDE is part of the accreditation criteria for student landlords and the Nottingham Standard accreditation – it was noted that the University has in the past contacted the landlords of the ‘top ten properties at risk’ to offer reduced price security.