

Should and could the police solve more crime?

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Sanction detection rates:

■ 2002/3	19%
■ 2003/4	19%
■ 2004/5	21%
■ 2005/6	24%
■ 2006/7	26%
■ 2007/8	28%

Offences brought to justice:

■ 2001/2	1,002,000
■ 2002/3	1,038,000
■ 2003/4	1,077,000
■ 2004/5	1,138,000
■ 2005/6	1,327,000
■ 2006/7	1,423,000
■ 2007/8	1,446,000

Convicted:

■ 2001/2	683,000
■ 2002/3	712,000
■ 2003/4	729,000
■ 2004/5	688,000
■ 2005/6	708,000
■ 2006/7	694,000
■ 2007/8	724,000

	PND	Cannabis warnings
■ 2001/2	0	0
■ 2002/3	2,000	0
■ 2003/4	4,000	0
■ 2004/5	49,000	26,000
■ 2005/6	110,000	63,000
■ 2006/7	147,000	81,000
■ 2007/8	137,000	103,000

VCMM Basic strategies

- Improvements in quality of crime recording/screening
- Overall oversight of the operation of the model by the DI responsible for reactive investigations.
- Supervision and direction of investigations by a DS working within a Crime Management Unit.
- Creation of Specialist Crime Response Teams (SCRTs) to respond to incidents of volume crime.
- Oversight of suspect management by an Evidence Review Officer.
- Maximisation of forensic and intelligence data collection and analysis opportunities, to ensure that suspects are linked to crime series.

Key stages

- Call handling and crime recording
- Crime screening
- Crime Management Unit procedures
- Investigation
- Suspect management

Tilley et al. Principal evidence in detected cases

- 34%** offender caught near scene
- 18%** info from victim/witness (often overlaps with first category)
- 27%** physical evidence
- 12%** stolen goods in offender possession
- 9%** admissions in interview
- 4%** informants

Low detectability =

1. Offence initially reported by public (not by police patrol/squad, or by an 'offender' in interview)
2. No readily identifiable suspect at time of report

Proxy for low detectability = types of offence with high proportions of cases (among those reported by the public) in which there is no readily identifiable suspect:

Theft of or from m/v (93% and 96%)

'Other theft' (89%)

Burglary (88%)

'Assessing Investigative Performance'

M Maguire, L Noaks, D. Hobbs, N. Brearley
(1990, unpublished)

All crimes

Low detectability crimes

	Clear up rate	(primary c.u. rate)
B2	40	(32)
D	37	(31)

B1	31	(24)
E1	30	(27)
A	28	(20)

F1	27	(12)
C	25	(11)

	Clear up rate	(primary c.u. rate)
	19	(12)
	21	(19)

	14	(9)
	7	(7)
	9	(8)

	22	(6)
	12	(4)

Burrows (1986)

If the majority of burglaries are committed by regular offenders... failure to interview them about past offences they may have committed will mean that the police cannot hope to achieve 'high' detection rates: even the theoretical arrest of *all* the burglars operating in an area – who, say, committed 10 offences each – would only produce a 10% clear up rate.

'Losing the Detectives'

M. Chatterton (2008)

“While detectives see resources being poured into the production of what are perceived to be spurious sanction detection rates, they struggle to find the time to investigate the more serious crimes on their case-loads. They find senior management’s low prioritisation of post-charge work particularly galling given that the quality and timeliness of the evidence they obtain will help to determine whether or not a case is subsequently discontinued or the prosecution successful. Convictions are considered not to be of concern to senior management because, unlike sanction detections, they are not counted as a measure of police effectiveness under the current performance assessment regime. By the same token, the work of the quick-win squads is considered to be more highly valued than theirs.”

(cont)

“GO CID cannot compete with these squads because the type of offences they investigate require more time and resources yet produce a lower yield of sanction detections. The failure of senior management to resource GO CID adequately is attributed to their lack of experience of the criminal investigation process as well as their fixation with targets.”

Concluding remarks

From concern about inconsistency to concern about too much consistency?

New agendas – neighbourhood, community engagement, partners...

Baby and bathwater? How lose the bureaucracy but maintain the best gains in investigative performance (skills, efficiency) and link them to local agendas? More flexible, diagnostic performance measurement linked to local priorities? (NIM, CDRP/CSPs, NP?)

- Yes – the police should detect more crime, but not necessarily more in total – more of the crime that matters to people in particular areas at particular times