The Interface between the Scottish Police Service and the Public as Victims of Volume Crime: Victim Perceptions
THE INTERFACE BETWEEN THE SCOTTISH POLICE SERVICE AND THE PUBLIC AS VICTIMS OF VOLUME CRIME:
Victim Perceptions

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This study was commissioned as part of a thematic inspection by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary of crime management in the Scottish police service. The main purpose of the research was to gather information from members of the public who had reported volume crimes in order to gain a greater understanding of levels of satisfaction or otherwise, with a view to identifying good practice and areas for improvement.

Research literature about the victims of crime has tended, over the past twenty years, to be dominated by a single major theme; it is the effect upon victims of the lack of information available to them about developments in their case from the police and the courts. For example, studies have shown that victims appear generally happy with their initial contacts with the police but, as their cases continued, they became increasingly frustrated with the opacity of the system.

METHODS

This research, although qualitative, was designed to include a sufficiently large number of participants so that the impact upon victims of crime of factors such as geographical location, offence type, age and gender could be explored. There were two stages of interviewing: focus group interviews, which allowed the main themes to be explored, and individual interviews, which allowed relevant issues to be discussed in greater depth. Focus group discussions were held across three police force areas with 12 individual victims (six male and six female) and in one force area with four corporate victims. Individual interviews were conducted across five force areas with 28 individual victims (16 female and 12 male) and across two force areas with eleven corporate victims.

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Overall the participants in the focus groups gave generally positive feedback in relation to the services that they received from the police, both in terms of the response time and of the level of professionalism demonstrated by individual contact officers. However, the response times varied in different areas. There was also a difference in response times in relation to the type of crime, with victims of domestic housebreaking receiving the quickest response time. However, positive views were not universal, with two female participants complaining of having been dealt with insensitively and three victims of vehicle related car crime expressing the view that they had been subject to “victim blaming” from the police.

The majority of respondents were issued with either a named contact officer or with a crime report number to enable them to receive information about the progress of their case with many victims of domestic housebreaking being issued with both options. The respondents who had been victims of domestic housebreaking were more likely to have been given further information about services that were available to victims of crime.
There was also a difference between the information that female victims received and the information that was given to the male victims. Female victims were more likely to have been given less technical information that may have been intended to offer some comfort, whereas the male victims were more likely to have been given much more formal and technical information with regards to police procedures.

With respect to closure of their case, many individual victims had no idea whether the case was ongoing or whether it had been closed and would have welcomed being kept informed about the outcome. The lack of communication with the police after the event, and the difficulties this created in terms of achieving a sense of closure, were the gaps in service most often identified. More commonly, however, participants expressed satisfaction with the levels of professionalism, response time or the individual personality traits of the attending officers. In general, victims of house breaking expressed a more positive image of the treatment that they had received, while participants who had been subjected to repeat victimisation had lower expectations about the services they would receive from the police. The majority of respondents expressed some frustration about the criminal justice system in general although even those who were more critical about their experiences often acknowledged the constraints under which the police were operating.

Corporate victims reported involving the police if they had detained the perpetrator or if they considered it a duty to alert them to a potentially wider problem. However some crimes would go unreported if there seemed little likelihood of them being solved. Response times were reported to have varied and the speed of the response was determined by several factors, including the time of day, the geographical location of the premises where the crime was committed, the seriousness of the situation, and whether anyone was in any immediate danger. There was a general agreement that the police responded professionally and appropriately. What some individual victims of crime had perceived as ‘victim blaming’ or unsolicited advice from uniformed officers was, in the case of the corporate victims, often interpreted as helpful advice on crime prevention or crime deterrence.

Among corporate victims there was a degree of sophisticated realism regarding the police follow-up with the majority of respondents having little or no expectations of continued communication or liaison between themselves and the police. There was unanimous acknowledgement that the police offer the best possible service under the circumstances. However, there was also unanimous agreement that services could be improved by a larger police presence and by improvements elsewhere in the criminal justice system.

**INTERVIEW FINDINGS: INDIVIDUAL VICTIMS**

Respondents had generally reported the incident to the police by telephone, stating that this was most convenient for them. However few had used the 999 service which they regarded as being for emergencies. The majority of victims were unconcerned about the speed of response, having relatively low expectations in this respect. Most were satisfied with or ambivalent towards the initial response of the police with only a few expressing some degree of dissatisfaction.

Some interviewees reported having been informed how the case would be progressed while others had received no information of this kind. However most were unconcerned about this, with only one third indicating that they would have found it useful to have received more
information at that stage. Some repeat victims reported that they had received very different
treatment on different occasions and procedures had been generally inconsistent between
cases.

The financial costs of the crime were often viewed by victims as easier to cope with than the
loss of items of emotional value which were viewed as irreplaceable. In addition, several
victims reported a loss of the previous sense of security that they had experienced and said
that they had become fearful of repeat offending.

Three-quarters of victims reported not having been provided with information about the
progress of their case even though two-fifths had a named officer who would deal with their
case throughout the enquiry. Just under one half of the interviewees indicated that they had
been made aware of other potential sources of support, such as Victim Support.

Nine respondents had initially stated that the crimes that had been committed against them
had been solved but many of them did not really know about the final outcome of their
individual cases. There was even more confusion about the cases that were not solved. Many
respondents had made assumptions that the case was closed because they had never been
given information from the police about the enquiry. Similarly, many respondents assumed
that the case was ongoing because they had never been given information to the contrary.

Most respondents believed that the police had dealt with them professionally and they were
satisfied with the overall treatment they had received from the police. Reference was made to
friendly, sensitive and reassuring officers and the response time was generally considered
good. That said, perceptions of professionalism were coloured, to some extent, by the
individual’s prior expectations of the services that they would receive from the police. Repeat victims had lower expectations in terms of service provision. There was a common
complaint about lack of follow up communication between victim and police

**INTERVIEW FINDINGS: CORPORATE VICTIMS**

There was a variety of reasons why corporate victims chose to report crimes to the police.
Some reported that they did so as a matter of company policy while others were more
concerned that a crime had been committed and that therefore attempts should be made to
apprehend the offender. All had chosen to report the incidents by telephone, with most
contacting their local police station.

In the majority of cases respondents reported satisfaction with response times by the police to
initial reports and the actual response in terms of officers attending and procedures observed
was generally viewed positively. There were differences between force areas at this stage
with respect to whether or not victims were apprised as to how the case would be progressed
and, likewise, differences with respect to whether they were provided with information about
support services and crime prevention.

Around one half of corporate victims believed they had received all the help they needed
from the police, though this was not always followed up beyond the initial stages of the case.
Several also believed that the public and police were let down by the justice system, when
suspects were apprehended and either returned to the community or prosecutions failed to
achieve convictions.
In the majority of cases respondents commented that they had never been officially informed about the outcome of the case. However they also considered this to be a worthless endeavour which would simply put a further drain on limited police resources.

Most of the corporate victims reported that the police had always acted professionally in their dealings with them and most were happy overall with the treatment they had received. Many expressed sympathy for the police whom they perceived to be doing the best job possible with very limited resources, while the criminal justice system was perceived by some as taking a very lenient stance against criminals.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Overall, victims expressed satisfaction about the service they had received from the police. Where they had complaints, they often indicated that they had nevertheless received the best possible response given the perceived limitations upon the police in terms of resources. Many respondents expressed frustration about the wider criminal justice system, and blamed agencies other than the police for the problems they experienced.

The general presentation of police officers was important to victims: they frequently commented upon the level of friendliness, courtesy, attentiveness, reassurance and the amount of time officers spent on interviewing them. In a number of cases, approval of officers' professionalism was linked by respondents to their perceived high levels of training. 'Well trained' officers were perceived as more professional.

The research confirmed a number of the findings of the existing literature (most of which does not separate volume crime out from other types of offences) and provided rich data on the attitudes and experiences of victims in urban, suburban and rural Scotland. Overall, it shows high levels of general satisfaction with the service received from the police, but it also highlights a number of specific areas where improvements could be made, particularly in relation to keeping victims informed of the progress of cases. Interestingly, it also demonstrates the extent to which members of the public understand the constraints under which the police work, and the willingness of victims of volume crime to make allowances in the light of other more pressing commitments with which the police may have to deal.
CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

This study was commissioned as part of a thematic inspection by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary of crime management in the Scottish police service. The main purpose of the research was to gather information from members of the public who had reported volume crimes in order to gain a greater understanding of levels of satisfaction or otherwise, with a view to identifying good practice and areas for improvement. The inspection concentrated upon volume crime (defined for these purposes as domestic and commercial housebreaking and thefts of and from motor vehicles) because detection rates for such offences are relatively low – although they have increased in recent years – and such crime represents the main day to day business of the police service. Victims’ views about how this is dealt with are therefore clearly very important, and relatively little is known about the attitudes of victims of such crime in Scotland (see Chapter Two).

The inspection team was working to a tight timetable, and the initial brief for the research required it to be completed within three months. This was later extended, but the whole study still took only five and a half months to complete. This has inevitably constrained the research team’s choice of methods (see Chapter Three), but a detailed interim report was prepared which informed the inspection process. The present report is based upon somewhat fuller data which were analysed more thoroughly over a longer period than was possible in the interim report.

The research confirmed a number of the findings of the existing literature (most of which does not separate volume crime out from other types of offences) and provided rich data on the attitudes and experiences of victims in urban, suburban and rural Scotland. Overall, it shows high levels of general satisfaction with the service received from the police, but it also highlights a number of specific areas where improvements could be made, particularly in relation to keeping victims informed of the progress of cases. Interestingly, it also demonstrates the extent to which members of the public understand the constraints under which the police work, and the willingness of victims of volume crime to make allowances in the light of other more pressing commitments with which the police may have to deal.
CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Research literature about the victims of crime has tended, over the past twenty years, to be dominated by a single major theme; it is the effect upon victims of the lack of information available to them about developments in their case from the police and the courts. The comprehensive study by Newburn and Merry: “Keeping in Touch - Police/Victim Communication in Two Areas” (1990) covered in detail much of the ground reported by their predecessors Shapland, Willmore and Duff (1985) and subsequently revisited by researchers over the next fifteen years. Indeed, there is a sense of déjà vu when reading much of the later material.

While the present study is concerned with the victims of volume crime in Scotland (i.e. housebreaking and vehicle-related incidents), which accounted for 26% of all crimes recorded in Scotland in 2001-2002, the literature under review did not often identify volume crime as a separate category when referring to the victims’ perceptions of the police. However, there was usually a distinction made between the impact on victims of different types of offence. This is referred to in this chapter where appropriate.

The present victimisation study is prompted by the Scottish Strategy for Victims launched in January 2001 and endorsed by the Scottish Parliament. The Strategy document listed a number of key principles, including:

- A recognition of the importance of the victim and the need to provide practical and emotional support to assist the victim to recover, and to help towards prevention of further crime or secondary victimisation;
- A commitment to provide explanations for victims about the criminal justice and other processes with which they are involved;
- A recognition that victims have a legitimate interest in the cases with which they are involved and so have a contribution to make;
- A commitment to offer victims information on the progress of their cases; and
- A recognition that victims should have a voice throughout all stages of the criminal justice system.

The policy objectives underpinning the three main aims of the Strategy are:

- the provision of emotional and practical support to victims;
- the provision of information to victims; and
- greater participation of victims in the criminal justice system.

(Scottish Strategy for Victims: Progress Report, 2003, p.4.)

Williams (1999b, p. 14) has argued that “victims’ needs have been the subject of lip-service, but have not received the degree of attention devoted to offenders.” He found the situation in the U.K. to be rather similar to that in the Netherlands. There, Wemmers (1996) had shown that the 1988 legislation, which required the police and prosecution to keep victims informed of the progress of cases and of their rights to restitution, was poorly implemented. Only a third of the Dutch victims who sought information actually received it, and over 70% of those suffering financial loss received no compensation.
More optimistically, Zedner (2002, p.419) took the view that at least:

“victims, once on the margins of criminological research, are now a central focus of academic research. . . . the victim has moved from being a ‘forgotten actor’ to become a key player in the judicial process. The promotion of victims’ interests at both national and international level has prompted debate about victims’ rights and the setting of standards of service. For victims are now the subject of political as much as criminological attention.”

Possibly both Williams and Zedner were right because a flurry of academic research and political agonising (and even of official guidance) does not necessarily result in effective administrative action - though, as the Strategy paper above illustrates, it may well provide an important precursor.

The present review is concerned principally with research literature which deals with the degrees of satisfaction expressed by victims about their experience of the police and, more generally, of the criminal justice system.

INITIAL CONTACTS BETWEEN VICTIMS AND THE POLICE

Newburn and Merry (1990) thought it probable that “many victims report offences to the police despite the fact that they view the offence as trivial and do not regard themselves as a victim. . . .[yet]. . . . they still regard it as important that it should be reported.” (p.6). Indeed, 40% of their respondents said that they appreciated that there was little that the police could be expected to do. With these provisos, the reasons given for reporting an offence to the police were given as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To catch the offender</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To help the police help others</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The right thing to do”</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needing help</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss/insurance purposes</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(p.7)

Beginning with the initial contact between the victim and the police, Newburn and Merry (1990) interviewed 100 victims drawn from two areas and concurred with the findings of Shapland et al. (1985) and of Smith and Grey (1985) which noted that while some had encountered difficulties with the 999 system or when telephoning their local police station, the majority of victims had experienced no problems when reporting an offence. Indeed, “the majority expressed neither dissatisfaction nor any explicit thoughts about how the contact might have been improved” (Newburn and Merry, 1990, pp.5-6)

Response time would seem likely to be a significant element in determining a victim’s perception of police effectiveness, although studies which combine discussion of a variety of different types of offence may fail to establish the precise meaning of aggregated data on satisfaction in this area. MacLeod, Prescott and Carson (1996) interviewed 255 victims of crime in three Scottish cities and found that 70% reported that the police had arrived within sixty minutes of being called to an incident and that 86% were satisfied with the time taken by the police to respond. There has been surprisingly little other research in this area.
With regard to the professional conduct of the initial contact, Newburn and Merry found that 85% of the victims in their survey were “satisfied or very satisfied” with the police. They noted also (p.37) that:

“Satisfaction and dissatisfaction appeared to be related to the manner in which the police were perceived by the victim to be dealing with the case. Concern, sympathy and interest led to feelings of satisfaction; conversely, where these were missing dissatisfaction ensued. The general demeanour and behaviour of the investigating officer appeared to be crucial, and this reinforces the message of Shapland et al’s (1985) research that it is respect and concern that victims desire.”

This finding is consistent with that of MacLeod, Prescott and Carson (1996) to whom 49% said that they felt that the police had done all that they could. Fifteen per cent of their respondents said that they were impressed with the promptness of the police response and the depth of investigation; and 7% were impressed by the generally sympathetic and helpful attitude of the officers.

The Progress Report on the Scottish Strategy for Victims (Scottish Executive, 2003, p. 9) noted perceptively that:

“Becoming a victim of crime can make an individual feel powerless and a lack of information about what is happening with their case can add to these feelings of helplessness. To many victims, the criminal justice process itself may seem remote and difficult to understand. However, access to information can do a great deal to help victims feel more in control.”

KEEPING VICTIMS INFORMED

Once the initial contact is over the lack of follow-up information from the police to the victim has been a well-researched source of dissatisfaction. Newburn and Merry (1990) were told by all the 50 police officers in their sample that, during the initial contact with a victim, they gave their name and telephone number, and most officers said that they would write this information down for victims. It appeared that the principal reason for doing this was to enable victims to ring them up a day or two after the offence to provide further information. It was also to enable victims to make contact again to inquire about what was happening in their case. Officers said that whenever possible they would try to let the victim know when an offender had been apprehended, but none of the police recalled ever having had victims contacting them to ask for advice about what was likely to happen in court. They also said they had never been asked about possible compensation or how to contact a Victim Support scheme. Conversely, a number of the victims explained this reticence by suggesting that they did not realise that they were able to ask for information about the progress or outcome of their case. In fact, ten of the victims did actually ring the police, of whom seven said that they received a negative or unhelpful response.

Perhaps precisely because there is a number of practical barriers to the establishment of a robust information system for keeping victims of crime informed of the progress of their cases, there is a substantial body of research evidence about the difficulties of devising and maintaining effective channels of communication between the police, the other relevant
authorities and agencies, and the victims during the progress of a case. Victims tend to assume that it is the job of the police to keep them informed, and do not necessarily understand the roles of the other criminal justice agencies in this respect. The various agencies do not necessarily communicate very well among themselves, adding to the complexity of the issue (see Crawford and Newburn, 2003, p. 227).

Newburn and Merry noted that “finding out what happened to the offender was described as being very important by most victims. It was the signal to them that the case had been officially closed.” Nonetheless, whilst the police tended to inform victims when an arrest was made, they were much less likely to let them know the final outcome (1990, p.19). As Williams (1999a, p. 103) noted:

“Information is one of the needs most frequently identified in research about victims and communications failures are among the most frequent complaints of those victims expressing dissatisfaction with the service they receive from the courts and the police (see also Anderson and Leitch 1996; Mawby and Walklate 1994).”

The MVA Consultancy (1995) conducted research commissioned by the Scottish Office as part of a Crown Office review of its provisions for keeping victims informed about the progress of their cases. The 915 victims interviewed were broadly representative of the age and sex of all crime victims and of the distribution of offences. MVA found that the police considered themselves to be the main providers of information about the progress of cases and that this was generally the perception of victims.

Forty-seven per cent of all the respondents said that the police had contacted them directly with information, usually when they were told if anyone had been charged. 476 of the 915 victims reported that they had been provided with no up-date on their cases, with 89% of them saying that they had wanted information but did not get it. MVA (1995, p.1) commented that:

“A significant proportion of victims said they had not received information at key stages in their case. This included 35% of victims who said they had not yet been told whether anyone had been charged and a further 58% of victims who knew someone had been charged but had not been told the outcome of their case despite reporting the crime over one year ago.”

Reasons given to MVA (p.4) by victims for wanting information were summarised under five main headings:

1. **Curiosity** - 40% - the victim being simply interested, or thinking that it would be nice to know if anyone had been charged, or a decision made to prosecute, etc.
2. **Rights** - 22% - with victims feeling that they have a right to certain information in relation to their case, so that the criminal justice agencies can be seen to be doing their job.
3. **Anger** - 19% - where victims experience anger and often need information to satisfy a need for retribution.
4. **Fear** - 16% - in which victims want information in connection with their case for personal safety reasons.
5. **Financial -2%** - when a victim wants information in connection with compensation and insurance.

Corrigan (2000), in the report of his research project into policing and the internet with a focus on customer service, referred to the MVA study and commented that:

“This study also examined the responsiveness to victims’ information needs by prosecutors and courts. It was identified that these were exclusively reactive e.g. they may provide information if asked but they did not proactively offer information to victims. Indeed 14% of the sample discovered something relevant to their case e.g. court appearance or a decision not to prosecute, from a newspaper or from a third party as compared with the 15% who received similar information when they contacted the Sheriff Clerk/Procurator Fiscal.”

Within the free text responses to this survey, there was a clear correlation between the lack of information and a perceived lack of activity or interest by the police and general criminal justice community.

“In terms of how information should be provided to victims, 40% expressed a preference for personal contact, with the remaining 60% preferring telephone, letter, leaflet, or other means. (It should be noted that this study pre-dated general acceptance of E-mail or internet as public communication media.) Some victims also reported difficulties experienced in identifying who ‘their’ investigating officer was and how/ when to contact this person.”

(p.12)

During 1992/93 MacLeod, Prescott and Carson (1996) engaged in extensive interviews with 255 victims from Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow a year after the crimes had been reported. Sixty per cent said that they had not been informed about the outcome of police enquiries although most of them wished that they had been. Of the 40% who were informed, 80% expressed themselves satisfied with the outcome. The research does not report what percentage of victims recalled being told that they would be kept informed.

In terms of practical action the 2003 Progress Report of the Scottish Strategy for Victims referred to the distribution of over 225,000 Victims of Crime Information leaflets to health and community agencies in order to provide information about the criminal justice process in a clear and accessible way. Additionally, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service has recently set up a Victim Information and Advice Service for vulnerable victims and those in the most serious cases in six of the eleven procurator fiscal areas. This is a part of the implementation of better support systems for victims of crime, about whom the Progress Report (p.7) remarked that:

“When an individual becomes a victim of crime, they will turn to the police, courts and prosecution service for action to deal with the offence itself, but they may also need support in helping them to deal with the impact of the crime on their life.”
OTHER SOURCES OF ADVICE AND SUPPORT

In addition to the studies of the availability of timely information to victims of crime, there has been considerable research into the provision of advice and support services for victims. Ingram (2000) recorded his findings from the 2000 Scottish Crime Survey with regard to “the emotional reactions of victims to victimisation in 1999, other practical problems and inconveniences caused by incidents of crime and post-incident support needs, including awareness and use of Victim Support.” He found that 34% of the 1070 victims interviewed for the Survey wanted some kind of post-incident support, but that over a third of this 34% of respondents had neither asked for nor received an offer of support. Of the total sample 76% said that they “had heard of Victim Support.” The types of support most commonly mentioned by victims were: information from the police; someone to talk to or moral support; and protection from further victimisation or harassment.

Of the 1070 respondents, 31% said that they had asked for or had received support from a range of different people or organisations, but it was in only 3% of cases that victims had asked for or received an offer of help from Victim Support. Somewhat surprisingly 86% of the victims did not think that Victim Support would have been helpful. The reasons for this are not explored in the study. Ingram concluded that:

“The data reveal that there is a gap between support needs and provision, although this tends to be in relation to less serious cases. It is not clear if this is a gap that could usefully be filled by Victim Support, as the majority of victims did not think that it would have been useful to have been contacted by the service. It should be recognised, however, that such responses may reflect misconceptions about what it is that Victim Support does and the ‘types’ of victims they exist to help.”

Maguire and Kynch (2000) undertook a rather similar type of study into the public perceptions and victims’ experiences of Victim Support as part of the 1998 British Crime Survey (i.e. in England and Wales). They found that among the victims of incidents of crime known to the police, the victim reported one or more needs in 63% of the cases: 29% wanted ‘information from the police’; 19% needed ‘someone to talk to’; 19% wanted ‘protection from further victimisation’; and 14% wanted ‘advice on security.’ (p.8)

Maguire and Kynch correlated the extent to which these particular needs were expressed with whether or not help of any kind was actually asked for or offered from any source. Of the 19% who expressed a need for ‘someone to talk to’, most sought or received help, whereas the needs for information, advice and protection from further victimisation were more likely to remain unmet. Maguire and Kynch (p.11) concluded that:

“....only 61% of those expressing definite needs had been in contact with one or more potential providers of support or assistance; in other words, at least 39% could be said to have had ‘unmet needs.’ The bulk of this unmet need seems to have concerned information and advice; practical help; and protection from further victimisation; those with a need for ‘someone to talk to’ were more likely to have sought or received help. While it is possible that in many cases the needs expressed were fairly minor and/or temporary in nature, this appears to be a problem worthy of further investigation”
Williams (1999b) pointed to the danger of creating expectations which are unlikely to be met. In a phrase which might well be appreciated by police officers he remarked that “central government control has been increased and victims have been led to expect a particular standard of ‘customer care’ which local services may be hard pressed to deliver in practice.....” (p.391). In the same paper he also noted that at that time the Victim’s Charter in England and Wales gave very selective information on the support available. In effect, it “concealed some of the choices which are open to them and guides them [toward Victim Support] away from collective action.” (p.384).

VICTIMS’ EXPECTATIONS

The expectations of victims about their contacts with the police and other agencies were investigated by Newburn and Merry (1990) who found that while the great majority expressed general satisfaction, about 20 of the 100 victims in their sample felt that the service provided did not meet their expectations. Victims tended to be dissatisfied when they did not feel that all could be done was being done (as did the police officers themselves). According to Newburn and Merry (p.6):

“The major reason for this feeling of dissatisfaction appeared to be the time taken and the [degree of ] interest shown by the officer involved in the case. . . . .Although the officer was courteous and appeared interested they did not really feel that all that could be done was being done. To an extent this ties in with police officers’ own estimation of their jobs and capabilities. . . . . because of the lack of time they were not always able to deal with cases in the way that they would like.”

Clearly, police responses to crime reports have to be prioritised, and one would expect response times to vary accordingly. Over half the victims in Newburn and Merry’s study said that all that they expected was for the police to come and ask them questions and to take down all the relevant details of the case. On the whole, Newburn and Merry found that victims did not have high expectations of what could be achieved by the police - most of them believed that clear-up rates were low and that detection was by no means guaranteed. This is interesting in view of the Accounts Commission’s finding that clear-up rates for volume crimes have been improving slowly but steadily in recent years (Accounts Commission, 2001). Even with regard to the provision of information about the outcome of ‘their’ case in court, where most victims wanted to be informed and thought that they should have been informed, only 55% said that they had expected to be informed.

Expectations are to some extent associated with what victims believe that they have the right to receive, and the MVA Consultancy (1995) explored the types of information which victims and the representatives of the criminal justice agencies thought that all types of crime victims are entitled to receive. (Cf. pp 4-5 ). This is discussed further below.

Sanders (2002) referred to the Victim’s Charter in England and Wales (Home Office, 1990; 1996) with the reminder that victims are still not parties to proceedings - unless they engage in a private prosecution - and as victims have no enforceable rights in relation to prosecution and subsequent decisions. Nonetheless, he was of the opinion that the Charters set out the ‘responsibilities’ of the criminal justice agencies and what victims, correspondingly, are entitled to expect (pp.202-3). Increasingly, prosecutors have come to recognise the
importance of keeping victims informed. Sanders refers (2002, pp. 214-5) to changes made in 2001/2 which aimed to ensure that prosecution lawyers in England and Wales speak directly to certain categories of victims to help them understand decisions made in their cases. In Scotland, the Victim Information and Advice Service has been set up within area offices of the Procurator Fiscal. This is designed to ensure that prosecutors provide relevant information to victims and create opportunities for victims to express any concerns quickly to officials with the power to act upon them. A website has also been created to give easy access to information for victims (Scottish Executive, 2003). However, this applies only to defined categories of vulnerable victims and to those involved in the most serious cases.

Victims’ expectations of the service they should receive may well influence their perceptions of the role of the police in the criminal justice system. As noted earlier, some victims report offences to the police even though they expect little response from the police and regard the incident as trivial (Newburn and Merry, 1990).

MacLeod, Prescott and Carson (1996, p.6) found that “for one in five victims, the most upsetting aspect of the incident was the feeling of having been let down in some way by the criminal justice system. More than eight out of ten victims felt that some change was desirable in the criminal justice system.” Nineteen per cent referred to the need for a general review of the system; the need for reduced bureaucracy and more access to information for victims. MacLeod et al commented that in some cases “victims may have been factually incorrect about police investigation and criminal court procedure. However, for these victims, their reported experiences and feelings were no less valid for being factually incorrect. .” (p.2)

Sanders (2002) described the developmental process by which police forces became bureaucracies positioned between victims and the courts and, therefore, effectively between victims and ‘their’ cases. Under the common law ‘expediency’ approach no crimes need to be investigated or prosecuted, but in theory any member of the public may investigate or prosecute. There is no legal requirement that the prosecution must take any particular heed of the wishes or interests of the victims, receive information from victims or provide information to victims.

The Scottish Strategy for Victims (Scottish Executive, 2000, 2003) recognised that this approach may make victims feel dispossessed because there is no apparent role for them in the process other than that of a witness, and it set out some administrative measures designed to “deliver greater participation” (p. 10) for victims. These include guidance on data protection, which has helped to improve referral rates, and the establishment of a Victim Information and Advice Service within Procurator Fiscal area offices to liaise with vulnerable victims and those involved in the most serious cases.

**LEVELS OF SATISFACTION WITH THE POLICE RESPONSE**

The diminishing satisfaction over time of victims with the management of cases has been a source of some concern and study. From England and Wales, where Sims and Myhill (2001) examined the findings from the 2000 British Crime Survey, it was reported that:

“**In 58% of reported incidents, victims were very or fairly satisfied with the way the police dealt with the matter. The proportion of victims satisfied with**
the police response has been gradually decreasing since the 1994 British Crime Survey. . . . . . . Satisfaction levels appear to be directly influenced by the practical outcome of police investigations. 77% of victims were very or fairly satisfied with police handling of the case if charges were brought, compared with 39% if the police knew who the offender was but brought no charges.”

(p.4)

Newburn and Merry (1990) referred back to Shapland et al (1985) whose longitudinal study of the experiences of victims

“charted continuous decline in levels of reported satisfaction as the victims progressed through the [criminal justice] system. In that study the victims appeared generally happy with their initial contacts with the police but, as their cases continued, they became increasingly frustrated with the opacity of the system. Crucial to this feeling were the difficulties they encountered in trying to keep in touch with developments in their cases.”

In qualitative terms, Newburn and Merry re-iterated the findings of Shapland et al. that victims’ satisfaction with their initial meeting with the police was mainly due to “the manner of the police, the speed at which the police came and whether the police were seen to do what the victim expected they would do” (pp.1-2).

Despite the emphasis upon the paucity of information available to victims, the MVA Consultancy (1995) found that dissatisfaction was not always the result of a lack of information, though the alternative offered is itself somewhat opaque: “Some victims felt that they had been treated insensitively by criminal justice agencies. If the agencies had treated them more sensitively, then it is likely that information would not have been such an issue” (p.2).

Newburn and Merry (1990) reported that many police officers had suggested to them that the promise of a follow-up visit from a Scene of Crime Officer or from a Crime Prevention Officer - particularly in burglary (housebreaking) cases - could serve to assure the victims that something was being done on their behalf. However, the necessity for a follow-up visit was generally seen to be determined by police requirements rather than victims’ needs. Although Newburn and Merry do not mention it, the effect of a broken promise is unlikely to inspire victims’ greater confidence in the police. They did, however, suggest that “much of the positive work done by the police in the hours and days after the offence was first reported was undone in the eyes of the victim by the lack of contact as the case progressed…” (p.18).

The research report published by Newburn and Merry some thirteen years ago has tended to dominate this review, perhaps because their chosen study was so immediately relevant to the present investigation. Much of what has been found in subsequent research was proposed by them when they asserted that:

“. . . . satisfaction and dissatisfaction appear to be related to the manner in which the police were perceived by the victim to be dealing with the case. Concern, sympathy and interest led to feelings of satisfaction; conversely, where those were missing, dissatisfaction ensued. . . . . It is respect and concern that victims desire. Much of the research that has looked at the
relationship between the police and victims of crime has suggested that in many ways the police look upon the victim as a resource, as a source of information and evidence which enables them to succeed in the primary task of policing - that of apprehending and prosecuting offenders. It is becoming increasingly apparent, however, that victims of crime find this relationship unsatisfactory. What they appear to desire is to be treated rather more like customers and rather less like an informational resource.” (pp.37-38)

In that context it is of interest that the sub-title of Corrigan’s Research Project (2000) at the Scottish Police College was “A Focus on Customer Service.” Newburn and Merry’s references to “concern, sympathy and interest” and to “respect” are among the very few references found in this literature to officers’ personal interactions with victims, rather than their overall professionalism. Another example (quoted earlier) was MacLeod, Prescott and Carson’s discussion of the “generally sympathetic and helpful attitude” of investigating officers (1996). However, this personal aspect of victims’ relationship with police officers seems to have been under-researched to date.

The Scottish Strategy for Victims Progress Report (Scottish Executive, 2003) listed some of the things that have already been done or begun in Scotland to deliver better support systems for victims, including improvements in “the support provided by the police in relation to repeat victimisation, racist crime, homophobic crime, stalking and harassment, and improved awareness of the needs of the elderly victims of crime” (p.8).

REPEAT VICTIMISATION

Like a number of other researchers, Williams (1999a, p.23)) pondered the phenomenon of repeat victimisation:

“Some people become victims of crime not once but repeatedly. Early research on victims examined the phenomenon of repeat victimisation and there was a tendency in some of this work to blame victims themselves for their predicament, or at least to appear to do so... More recent researchers have argued that linking repeat victimisation to the victims’ lifestyle or behaviour diverts attention away from broader issues like class and gender divisions, and thereby individualises the social processes by which victims are created.”

He asked whether such variables as gender, race, class or disability might interact with poverty and lack of opportunities to explain the concentration of victimisation in particular areas and groups. (The issue of victim-blaming is discussed below).

Katherine Williams (2001, pp.99-100) asserted that:

“certain groups (e.g. those living in the inner cities, the young, ethnic minorities) will suffer far higher rates of victimisation. Apart from the uneven distribution, those who suffer most are those who can least afford the loss and to whom even a small loss may be devastating. ...Recent studies have categorically shown that ‘victimisation predicts further victimisation’, thus what is happening is not so much an increase in the total number of people becoming victims, but for actual victims to suffer more than once.”

11
In a comment addressed principally to researchers Ingram (2000, Chap.1) noted that:

“The questions dealing with reactions to victimisation and with Victim Support services are, of course, only asked of respondents who have fallen victim to crime. In the 2000 Scottish Crime Survey there were 1,474 cases available for analysis, representing some 1,070 respondents. The unit of analysis here is the incident and it is important to remember that some respondents will have been victimised more than once. This relatively small number of cases means that care must be exercised when interpreting the data and there are limits to the type of analysis that can be conducted - for example it is not possible to control for crime type when examining other significant variables.”

As implied by Katherine Williams, repeat victimisation would appear to be closely associated with the greater vulnerability of some victims. Maguire and Kynch (2000) used the findings from the 1998 British Crime Survey (in England and Wales) to try to identify some highly specific categories of victims who appeared to be exceptionally vulnerable by dint of their personal or social circumstances. To some extent their initial categories were assembled on the basis of their sense of compassion for “the very old, the very poor, and people suffering from extreme poverty, restricted lifestyles, social isolation, harassment, and/or repeat victimisation who are likely to be more vulnerable to the emotional and/or practical effects of crime, and may have less access to help from social networks or official sources.” (p.6)

The composition of the groups was subsequently refined in the light of the Survey evidence about impact and needs. In the following list, they stated that:

“respondents in all these categories were much more likely to have been ‘very much’ affected by the incidents they experienced, and having wanted help after them, than victims as a whole:
  * the very poor and uninsured
  * the very poor with restricted mobility
  * single parents
  * the intimidated
  * the relatively housebound - victims reporting that they never or rarely go out after dark for reasons of disability, being a carer, lack of money or transport, various fears, or having ‘nowhere to go.’” (p.6)

As well as vulnerability, repeat victimisation may be a result of the same offender targeting the same victim again. Pease (1996, pp. 326-7) found that “the best single predictor of burglary victimisation was past victimisation”. Clearly, as van Dijk (2001, pp. 30, 33) has pointed out, reporting on the findings of the 1996 International Crime Victims Survey:

“Whatever the precise causes of repeat victimisation are, its statistical prevalence has important policy implications. If victimisation flags heightened vulnerability for future victimisations, victims are a priority target group of crime prevention advice... repeat victims, in short, might want more than other victims to see some real action from the police on their behalf... Repeat victims contact the police with more demanding aims than other victims.”
Repeat victims are more likely than first-time victims to want an offender arrested, and consequently they are more likely to be dissatisfied with police handling of their cases. Burglary/housebreaking victims in particular are highly likely to be re-victimised (Pease, 1998), often within a matter of weeks (Polvi et al., 1991). Police responses to burglary (housebreaking) reflect this knowledge, for example in the priority given to crime prevention advice. Victims of repeat burglaries (housebreaking) are more likely to take notice of crime prevention advice (Morgan, 2001) but they may also resent being told that they are likely targets for further offences. A good deal depends upon how this information is communicated by police officers: if done clumsily it can come across as a form of victim-blaming. As Farrell and Pease put it (1993, p. 3), “there might be an understandable reluctance to be frank about it because it may evoke fear of crime. It is not reassuring to tell a victim that a burglar may indeed come back.”

BLAMING THE VICTIM – OR APPEARING TO DO SO

The psychological reactions to victimisation often include self-blame (Williams, 1999a), and an insensitive police response can clearly heighten this effect. This has been observed in research on sexual offences, in particular rape, but is also likely to be a factor in relation to volume crime. Crime prevention advice needs to be given in a way which does not induce guilt or seem to blame the victim. If this is done in the case of burglary (housebreaking), there is evidence that it can be an effective form of crime prevention, ideally linking with the provision of crime prevention advice with other forms of victim assistance such as ‘cocooning’ and the provision of Victim Support (Crawford, 1998; Forrester et al., 1990). The likelihood that insensitive advice about the prospects of repeat victimisation might make matters worse for victims should perhaps be considered in the training of operational police officers.
CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

This research, although qualitative, was designed to include a sufficiently large number of participants so that the impact upon victims of crime of factors such as geographical location, offence type, age and gender could be explored. There were two stages of interviewing: focus group interviews, which allowed the main themes to be explored, and individual interviews, which allowed relevant issues to be discussed in greater depth.

ACCESS

Access to respondents was obtained through HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and individual police forces, which identified potential participants from their records. Forces were asked to contact a random sample of victims who fitted the research criteria to establish whether they were willing to take part in the research and for their details to be passed to the researchers. Participants were then contacted directly by the researchers and invited to attend focus groups or to take part in individual telephone interviews.

SELECTION OF STUDY AREAS

Five of the eight Scottish police force areas were chosen as study areas. After examination of the existing, official victim satisfaction data, these five areas were chosen to reflect a range of levels of recorded victim satisfaction, and to ensure geographical spread, that is, a mixture of city, town and rural locations.

DATA COLLECTION: FOCUS GROUPS

Following discussion at the Research Advisory Group it was agreed that a total of twelve focus group discussions would be facilitated in five forces. In each of these forces this would include two focus groups involving individual victims of housebreaking and vehicle-related property crime. In two of the forces an additional focus group discussion would take place with corporate victims of volume crime. Seven focus groups were actually run, as follows:

**Strathclyde** – two individual focus groups, one of men and one of women (two participants per group) and one corporate focus group (four participants, all male), all involving respondents from Glasgow and held in Glasgow city centre. Two of the corporate participants worked for car companies in a managerial position, one worked in a large retail store in a managerial position and one worked in a convenience store which was part of a large franchise. This man worked as a supervisor of part-time staff.

**Grampian** – two focus groups in the more rural area of Aberdeenshire, held in Peterhead (women) and Inverurie (men) (three participants per focus group).

**Fife** - two individual focus groups, one of men and one of women, both held in Kirkcaldy, with participants from the towns of Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy (one participant per focus group).
The attendance and respondent numbers were lower than had been anticipated. A topic guide was used to direct the discussion throughout the focus groups. However, the discussion was allowed to develop and have a natural progression.

Focus groups were used because this method offers an economical way to gather rich data, and the social dynamics developed during such group interviews can contribute to the collection of rich data (Bradley, 1998; Kreuger, 1994; Walklate, 2000). People talking in groups can, if the discussions are ably facilitated, stimulate one another towards disclosure and discussion of a greater depth than in individual interviews. Police forces selected potential focus group participants in order to include the two main different crime types, and both first time and repeat victims. For householders, victims were also selected to give a range of socio-economic circumstances and age groups. For corporate victims, the sample was chosen to include a mixture of large and small businesses. In each force area one male-only and one female-only focus group was conducted. This was because the research team considered that women might find it difficult to discuss potentially sensitive issues in the presence of men, and vice-versa. In order to maximise consistency across focus groups, and increase the validity of analysis, each group was co-facilitated by two members of the research team.

Focus groups were conducted in neutral venues, principally hotels. Focus group discussions lasted between one and one and a half hours. Except where there were only one or two participants, in which case full notes were taken, the discussions were tape recorded with participants’ consent, and later transcribed. Semi-structured schedules, which had been approved by HMIC, were prepared for focus groups and individual interviews.

ETHICAL ISSUES

It was made clear to all participants that their involvement was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the interview at any point. The research design was considered in detail and approved by De Montfort University’s human research ethics committee. Respondents’ confidentiality was carefully protected, and no identifying details were kept with the interview transcripts.

REVISIONS TO PLANNED METHODOLOGY

It had been the intention also to run groups in Northern (two individual focus groups in a rural part of the area and one corporate victims’ focus group in Inverness) and Lothian and Borders (two individual focus groups in Edinburgh city). Following the experience of the first seven groups, it was decided not to proceed with the groups in Lothian and Northern.

It had been anticipated that between eight and twelve participants would attend each group; however, between one and six participants took part, with most groups including only two or three participants.

There were insufficient participants from minority ethnic backgrounds to allow for a dedicated focus group for this sub-sample in Strathclyde, as had been proposed initially.
Based on previous experience, in the opinion of the research team, there were several reasons for the lower than expected participation in focus groups. One was the short lead-in time, due to the tight timescale of the research and the difficulties in finding suitable venues for meetings at short notice. For many participants, and not only in rural areas, attendance at a group involved travelling a considerable distance, and the groups took place in winter. Although travel expenses were offered, no provision was made for compensation for participants’ time. Some potential participants expressed unwillingness to travel on the grounds of personal safety. Finally, some participants had moved away from the addresses given or were otherwise unobtainable.

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Individual telephone interviews were employed because this method was likely to elicit richer data and a higher response rate than postal questionnaires (Maguire and Bennett, 1982). The flexible, semi-structured format used allowed new issues which arose during the discussion to be followed up immediately in a natural way. The design of the semi-structured interview schedule built upon the data gathered during the focus groups.

It was originally proposed to conduct 48 individual interviews in each of three research areas. Due to the lower than anticipated number of focus groups, the target number of individual interviews was increased to 60. Of the original 60 potential respondents whose names were provided by police forces, some had moved away or were not contactable. Further names were obtained and fresh attempts were made to reach the target number of interviews. The time constraints imposed by the inspection timetable made it impossible to continue contacting fresh groups of individual victims, and by the end of the study 39 people had been interviewed individually and 16 in focus groups, making a total of 55 respondents. The sample of respondents was chosen to represent different offence types, each sex, and different age groups.

In order to maintain a fair representation of the study group involved it was important to maintain a balanced sample in terms of the geographic location, age, gender, and ethnic background of the respondents, and the type of crime that had been committed against the individuals.

Summary breakdown of the interviews conducted with individual victims

All 28 respondents described their ethnic origin as white. The age range was 19-79 years.

Gender breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male victims</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female victims</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Case resolution figures:

| Crimes that had been solved or finalised | 9  |
| Crimes that were never solved or cases were still ongoing | 19 |
| **Total** | **28** |

Type of crime:

| Vehicle related crime [VR] | 15 |
| Domestic housebreaking [DHB] | 9 |
| Both [VR+DHB] | 4 |
| **Total** | **28** |
| of whom, repeat victims | 13 |

Geographical location:

| Strathclyde | 7 |
| Lothian and Borders | 4 |
| Grampian Police | 5 |
| Northern Constabulary | 4 |
| Tayside | 8 |
| **Total** | **28** |

Individual semi-structured interviews were carried by telephone. Interviews were recorded, using hand-set recording equipment, with the consent of participants, and transcribed.

**Summary breakdown of the interviews conducted with corporate victims**

Eleven telephone interviews were conducted with the corporate victims of volume crime (aged between 26 and 56 years). Given the fact that the respondents were from businesses, and as such, were subject to repeated crimes committed against them, it was very difficult to ascertain any reliable quantitative data from such a small sample. However, some respondents stated that some crimes against them were solved. Similarly, the majority of respondents reported that they had been victims of several types of crimes. It is important to note that the figures recorded do not reflect the reality or the volume of the crimes that are committed against corporate victims of crime.

| Crimes that were solved | 5 |
| Crimes that were not solved | 6 |
| **Total** | **11** |
Type of crime:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime Type</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle related crime</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housebreaking (commercial)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crimes committed against business or place of work</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeat victims</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender breakdown of respondents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ethnic group:

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Geographic location:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic Location</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strathclyde</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grampian / Aberdeenshire</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Type of business:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Business</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small family business</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car sales/ rental</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel / catering</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture retail</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barber shop</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Bar</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondent’s position within the company:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General manager</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales/general staff</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Again, respondent numbers were lower than had been anticipated. Here, too, a semi-structured interview schedule was used to direct the discussion throughout the focus groups, but the discussion was allowed to develop and progress naturally.

DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis of focus groups and interviews was done manually by coding relevant themes. The data were pooled for analysis to enable the relevance of different variables to be examined, but where issues arose that were specific to individual forces the analysis process was flexible enough to allow these to be highlighted. To ensure greater validity, the analysis of each interview was carried out by two researchers, one of whom was the interviewer. The research team also had the opportunity to discuss emerging themes, having all read the transcripts.

An initial analysis of the themes arising from focus groups was presented to the research advisory group before individual interviews commenced, allowing emerging findings to be included in the inspection report.
CHAPTER FOUR  

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

INDIVIDUAL VICTIMS

Reason for reporting the crime

In the first section of the schedule respondents were asked to comment on the reasons for them making the decision to contact the police. Evidence suggests that the majority of the respondents contacted the police almost as a gut reaction when they discovered that they had been a victim of crime. Comments included:

“I don’t think I made a conscious decision. I realised somebody had been in our house, got my husband to inspect it and the first thing I did was pick up the phone. I think it was almost a gut reaction as opposed to deciding why, I don’t think I actually stopped to think about it.” (Domestic housebreaking)

“I don’t think I made a conscious decision. I thought a window had broken and I couldn’t understand it and then just realised, because I felt air when I came in the door and I thought the window’s broken and the first thing we did was dial the police.” (Domestic housebreaking)

“I don’t know really, it was my gut reaction I suppose when I realised that my house was done.” (Domestic housebreaking)

“It’s what you do isn’t it? You don’t think about it…. you just do it.” (Vehicle related crime)

Respondents were then asked if they called the local police station or if they used the emergency services 999; why they chose to report the crime in the way that they had; and if they knew of any other way that they could have reported the crime to the police. There was a general reluctance to contact the emergency service unless the situation was regarded as an emergency. However, two female victims of domestic housebreaking felt that 999 was the best option in their situation. One respondent who had used the emergency service commented that: “I live in Peterhead. I could have gone to the police station but I suppose it was the quickest option” (Domestic housebreaking) while another who used 999 stated that: “I wanted to get someone here as soon as possible”. (Domestic housebreaking)

Some respondents were more vague about how they had contacted the police:

“I can’t remember if we dialled 999 or actually phoned the police station” (Domestic housebreaking)

“I’m not familiar with how the police were contacted because we’re out in the country.” (Domestic housebreaking)

“Do you know, I can’t remember it was so long ago.” (Domestic housebreaking)

Other respondents expressed their reluctance to call the emergency services.
“I think we actually looked up the directory; we didn’t dial 999.” (Domestic housebreaking)

“I called the local station, 999 is only for emergencies.” (Vehicle related crime)

“It was the local police; you know you can’t just call the emergency services.” (Vehicle related crime)

“Well, it’s not like they could do anything quicker if I called 999, besides it wasn’t really an emergency.” (Vehicle related crime)

“You’re kidding, 999, they would have laughed at me if I called 999.” (Vehicle related crime)

Response times

Respondents were asked about the police’s response time and about the importance of the response time for them. Although it was not universally positive, overall the respondents gave generally positive feedback in relation to the services that they received from the police, both in terms of the response time and of the level of professionalism demonstrated by individual contact officers. However, the response times varied in different areas.

There was also a difference in response times in relation to the type of crime, with victims of domestic housebreaking receiving the quickest response time. Times recorded ranged from 10 minutes to a few hours. However, one female victim of domestic housebreaking had waited for several hours for the police to attend. Many victims of motor vehicle related crime reported a response time ranging from a few hours to a few days in some cases.

However, it is interesting to note that many of the respondents who had commented that the police response time was slow were also quick to defend the police by offering some other justification for the slow response. Some comments follow:

“I would say it was probably ten, fifteen minutes on both occasions. It probably felt longer because you were hanging about, you couldn’t touch anything, and you couldn’t do anything.” (Domestic housebreaking)

“I wouldn’t have complained about their response time at all. They are very busy.” (Vehicle related crime)

“Na, they came as soon as they could, I don’t even know how long they took but I wasn’t bothered either way...the deed was done already.” (Vehicle related crime).

“Well they arrived in about half an hour the second time; I was surprised at the speed of the response. In the past I have had to wait for hours.” (Repeat victim: vehicle related crime)
“Mine weren’t that quick because they were actually dealing with a traffic accident when we phoned and we don’t have that many policemen wandering about the area. I think the glazier arrived before them, so they were at least an hour.” (Domestic housebreaking)

“It felt like ages, but I suspect they were very busy that night, but I was quite anxious about the time... yes.” (Domestic housebreaking)

Response received from the police

Respondents were then asked what was the police’s response to the call and what were their thoughts on the way that the police had responded. Overall, there was a generally positive view of the police’s initial attendance and response, with comments like:

“Yes they were fine, they were nice, they were friendly, helpful and just looked round. They said it would be a drug addict and that they would have been in the house a few minutes and then gone. This made me feel more relaxed.” (Domestic housebreaking)

“The officers were very helpful and really put me at my ease.” (Domestic housebreaking)

“The police at the station stayed on the phone with me for twenty minutes until the other officers were able to get to my home. This was very reassuring for me because at that time I was not sure if the burglar was still in my house.” (Domestic housebreaking)

“The officers answered all of my questions... and although the crime happened on a bank holiday and there was a shortage of police on shift, they never once made me feel that I was wasting their time or that they were in hurry to go elsewhere.” (Domestic housebreaking)

“The constable gave me his card and supplied me with a crime number to quote when making any enquiries. I had contact with this officer throughout the case...if I called to speak to him he would always return my call as soon as he was available...This was very reassuring for me.” (Domestic housebreaking)

However, the positive comments were not universal. Two female respondents commented that the police acted very insensitively with them. One commented that:

“We looked to the officer for reassurance but the officer told me that I could expect the criminal to return...he was right, the same person has returned and has tried to break-in again. For a long time I was very scared to leave the house.” (Domestic housebreaking)
while another observed:

“I was told it would be another unsolved crime and they will be back. The way they’ve left your house they will definitely be back, that’s one thing I can assure you. This time I was a gibbering wreck and my husband was giving it, do you think you need to tell her that? And I said, well there was no point in you coming. He said, oh but there was, you needed the police reference number for your insurance claim. And I was like, oh, I wasn’t very impressed. I mean, I know they can’t lie to you.” (Domestic housebreaking)

One female who had been a repeat victim commented that:

“I think we were quite lucky the first time that they had actually got somebody in custody before we reported it. The second time they had to get forensics in and of course, they couldn’t get fingerprints, they couldn’t get anything. And they were actually called away five minutes after they’d arrived to another break in, another alarm had gone off somewhere, but the second time I was more gutted than I was the first time.”

Three victims of vehicle related car crime expressed the view that they had been subject to “victim blaming” from the police. Two respondents expressed the view that the police had dealt with them in ways which made them feel embarrassed about the age or make of their vehicle. For example, one respondent commented that;

“I felt that I had to explain to him that I live alone and that I have to hold down two jobs in order to keep the car on the road, I was not in the position to buy a new car... I felt totally demeaned and embarrassed.” (Vehicle related crime)

This respondent also reported that an officer commented on the state of her car and made remarks about her personality, which together upset her more than the crime itself. In this particular case the respondent had used a chain to secure the gate to her driveway, and claimed that when the police officer entered her home after inspecting the damage to her car he was holding the chain in his hand. The respondent stated that “he [the officer] said ‘it’s not surprising’ [that her car was stolen] and he dropped the chain [she had used to secure the car] on my floor.”

Another respondent stated that:

“My car had been broken into so many times that I felt embarrassed to report it to the police...on previous occasions when I did report the crime I was made to feel that it was my fault for not securing the vehicle properly.... The car was in my driveway and the gate was padlocked.... I don’t know what else I could have done.” (Vehicle related crime)

Similarly, another respondent commented that;

“My husband and I were away at the time of the break-in and my father-in-law was keeping an eye on the property.... The burglars had opened the valves on my radiators upstairs which had flooded my front room...when my father-
in-law entered the house and saw the water, he had assumed that we had a burst pipe, therefore he didn’t contact the police immediately. When he did contact the police and explain what had happened, the police made him feel very guilty that he had not acted sooner to report the crime. He still feels guilty to some extent.” (Domestic housebreaking)

One respondent who was the victim of repeat crime commented that the police in a case of vehicle related crime

“had a good laugh at my expense... apparently a Vauxhall Astra is the easiest car to break into... one officer said to me, ‘You would have been better to leave the keys in the car... that way your locks wouldn’t keep getting busted... and we wouldn’t have to keep running back and forth here to hear the same old story.”

Progress of case / information and liaison

Respondents were asked about the progress of their case and about the service that they had received from the police i.e. feedback or liaison. The majority of respondents were issued with either a named contact officer or with a crime report number to enable them to receive information about the progress of their individual cases; many victims of domestic housebreaking were issued with both options.

Respondents were asked if they had been given any information about other services that were available to victims of crime, such as Victim Support, Crime Prevention etc. Again the responses varied with crime type. The respondents who had been victims of domestic housebreaking were more likely to have been given further information about services that were available to victims of crime. However, it is difficult to gauge the exact percentage of respondents who had been supplied with this information as in many cases the crime was committed a considerably long time ago and the events of the incident were no longer very clear to them.

“No, I never got offered that. I got a pack telling me to light up the house and cut my hedge down and all that kind of stuff but not any actual support”. (Female victim of domestic housebreaking)

“No, I’m not really sure but I think they did mention Victim Support and I wasn’t really interested.” (Female victim of domestic housebreaking)

“I think they must actually contact Victim Support because I got, they actually phoned me the first time, they didn’t the second. We got the pack the second time.” (Female victim of domestic housebreaking)

“I never got the pack and they were supposed to have, you know, those pens in it and there was no pens in our pack and he said, oh I’ll get back to you, I’ll get back to you and months afterwards I actually went to the police station and put my hand out and said, pens.” (Female victim of domestic housebreaking)
“No I don’t think so…yes they did, they did …one officer asked me if I wanted to speak to someone … I think about counselling or something…I’m not that sure to be honest.” (Female victim of domestic housebreaking)

**Scenes of crime officers**

Respondents were asked if they had been kept informed about the progress of the case, and about how the police would proceed with their enquiry such as evidence gathering, the broader criminal justice system and so on. Again there seemed in several cases to be some confusion about the information that the respondents had received from the police at the time of the incident. For example, one respondent commented that “we had a finger prints man came the next day” while others stated:

“Well it was night-time but they {the police} were busy, so we weren’t allowed to move the stuff overnight, like tidy away some of the stuff that they thought they might have touched. I think that was for fingerprints and stuff.” (Domestic housebreaking)

“….but the guy said [fingerprints] there’s no point doing any of your furniture, any of your stuff, because actually the powder that they use would ruin your furniture. He said, you’ve been broken into, there’s no point me coming now and ruining your furniture as well, you know, add insult to injury. So he did the window and he got trainer prints, it could be anybody. There was nothing, he was obviously wearing gloves.” (Domestic housebreaking)

“They did get the fingerprint from our window the first time but they couldn’t pick anything up the second time.” (Domestic housebreaking)

One victim of vehicle related crime (car theft) commented that there was a great deal of confusion about whether and when any forensics had been done. It took a considerable amount of time to have his car returned to him. It transpired that when his car was returned to him forensic tests had not been conducted. The respondent subsequently discovered a pair of shoes in his car that belonged to whoever had stolen the car.

Similarly, another victim of vehicle related crime (car theft) commented that he was very confused by the conflicting information that he had received from the police with regards to how the police would proceed with their enquiry and how they would gather evidence. The respondent stated that when the police informed him that his car had been found the investigating officer could not give him any information on the current whereabouts of the car. After the respondent carried out his own detective work, with the help of his insurance company, he discovered that the car had been towed to a scrap yard in another town forty miles away. This man expressed his frustration about the whole ordeal and had felt a sense of disempowerment, firstly by the theft and secondly by the treatment that he had received from the police and from his insurance company.

There was also a difference between the information that female victims received and the information that was given to the male victims. Female victims were more likely to have been given less technical information that may have been intended to offer some comfort, whereas
the male victims were more likely to have been given much more formal and technical information with regards to police procedures.

However, two female respondents expressed the view that they were very satisfied with the information that they had received from the police. Both had been given very detailed information about police procedures in relation to the crime that had been committed against them. One of the women commented that:

“By the time the officers left my home I was in no doubt about how they would proceed….I had no other questions... they [the police] were very honest and direct with me...although the officers didn’t offer much hope of catching the perpetrators, It was a realistic assessment of the events as they saw it... this was very reassuring for me.” (Domestic housebreaking)

Male victims also seemed to welcome this directness:

“Yes, the officers were very helpful...they explained everything to me... they were very honest and no bull.” (Male victim of domestic housebreaking)

“I was satisfied that the police would do everything possible to find the ones that were responsible for the crime, but the officers explained that there wasn’t much hope of getting a conviction, It’s drugs here...big incident rates of drug related crime in this area. But they did get the person who was responsible the very next day.” (Male victim of domestic housebreaking)

Victims of vehicle related crime were less likely to have been told about other services that are available to victims of crime, however many of them commented that they did not think that this kind of information would have been of much use to them in their individual situations.

Closure of the case

Respondents were asked about the final outcome of their individual cases. Many had no idea whether the case was ongoing or whether it had been closed.

“My was two years ago, a year past January, I haven’t heard a thing.”

“A year past March and two years past January. Well they don’t really tell you.”

“No, you didn’t hear anything back.”

“We never heard another word about it.”

“I think it was done, I mean someone was caught... but I don’t know if the case was closed, the officer on the phone told me to check the local news paper to see the result...there was nothing in it.”

“Well...I suppose it would be asking a bit much of the police to tell everyone about the outcome of the case...but it would be nice to know if the case was still open or what.”
Respondents were asked if the case ever went to trial and, if so, what was the outcome. Again, there was some confusion about how the case had progressed. This had caused some confusion and frustration for the respondents:

“Well I don’t know because the bloke that they got has got convictions in it but the crime reporter had disappeared at that point and I phoned and asked the police and they said they didn’t know, to phone the sheriff’s officer. And I phoned there and I never really got an answer from anybody because I didn’t even know the man’s name to ask, you know, because the case never came, so I couldn’t say, was so and so convicted. I did hear that he’d been sent to a young offenders’ wherever it was but that was the police thought he’d been sent to a young offenders’. I suppose once they’ve finished in court they’re not really interested in what happens to them.” (Female victim of domestic housebreaking)

“Mine was closed so, well I think it was because I wasn’t really sure. I mean yours could be closed because they just got the boy to say he did it and that way they can just tick you off and say, that’s your case closed so they don’t have to follow up about anything else.”

“I mean I don’t know how long they’d keep a case open but I can’t think for that sort of case, where it’s not a murder, it’s what they’d call a petty crime I suppose, that they’re going to worry about it often, six months or something.”

Many respondents commented that they were not really interested in knowing the offender’s name or personal details, but added that it would have given them some reassurance if they knew that the offender was no longer committing the same offence in their respective geographical locations. As one respondent commented, “I sometimes wonder if he’ll come back” (Female victim of domestic housebreaking).

However, many respondents acknowledged that the police were under considerable strain due to lack of resources. One respondent observed that “the police can not be there all the time”, and continued: “I think that probably, if it hadn’t been the guy that was caught it would probably have been somebody else” (Female victim of domestic housebreaking).

When asked if they would have found it useful to have been informed about the outcome of the case the majority of respondents said that it would have been very useful.

Gaps identified in the service

Respondents were asked to identify any gaps in the service that they had received from the police. The majority of the respondents made comments about the lack of communication with the police after the event, and the difficulties this created in terms of achieving a sense of closure, as the following quotations demonstrate:

“It would just be the follow up I think in terms of what happened to them, what they’re actually doing and how long they’ll keep it open, they’ll probably never close it until they convict somebody. To keep you informed about what’s happening.”
“But I imagine with the amount of crime that’s going on, it would be very hard and time consuming to keep everybody informed, just telling you like, we’ve no news...but maybe it would make you feel better.”

“I don’t think they’re very quick in telling you, especially not negative news, they’d probably never ring and say we haven’t caught him yet.”

“You would like to hear what was going on...is it closed or what?”

“A wee phone call wouldn’t hurt...just to tell you that the case is closed...even if they didn’t get anybody.”

Two respondents commented on what they had perceived as insensitivity from the police in relation to the court appearance:

“No, they seemed all right. The only time I didn’t like the police was when I was waiting at Peterhead and all the police officers were in the witness room and they were so macho and I just thought, God, because the girlfriend of the boy who was being tried for my case was in and she was obviously a drug addict, she was shaking, I don’t know, I just felt, I don’t know, I mean I didn’t feel any antagonism towards her but I felt it must have been an awful environment for someone to come in because I mean, she didn’t commit the crime and the policemen seemed very macho and laughing along with themselves and stuff and, I mean I know they’re bored because they’re sitting there for hours and hours and hours and that’s their day off I discovered, that’s what they do on their day off.”

“I don’t know if they get overtime, they’re called in on their days off and they sit there for hours but I didn’t like them then. I felt, I suppose they are insensitive but I know the policemen and I know they’re not sensitive, a lot of them. I suppose from their point of view they just think, oh there’s been a break in, what’s your name and it just seems to be, that’s the kind of impression I got, you know, it’s like another unsolved crime, they’ll need the number. It’s just routine, you know; we’ll do this today, we’ll do it tomorrow.”

Examples of good practice

Respondents were asked to identify any examples of good practice from the services that they had received from the police. The majority of the respondents made reference to the levels of professionalism, response time or the individual personality traits of the attending officers.

“The police at the station stayed on the phone with me for twenty minutes until the other officers were able to get to my home. This was very reassuring for me because at that time I was not sure if the burglar was still in my house.”

“The officers answered all of my questions... and although the crime happened on a bank holiday and there was a shortage of police on shift, they never once made me feel that I was wasting their time or that they were in hurry to go elsewhere.”
Some people speculated that it was all down to good training, or to the age of the officers. For example:

“I got a young policeman, came round to ask, I think maybe he was a bit more sensitive than maybe an older policemen. He was quite new and I think he might have been, they might get better training about being sort of more, feel that folk would be, feel violated in some way... But maybe, he was quite nice that policeman, he was quite sympathetic. As I say, he was quite young.”

“I think maybe it could have because I imagine now, because there’s so much, the thing about the victim or there’s more emphasis or trying to be more emphasis on the victim that maybe they are trained a bit better to at least look sympathetic even if they don’t feel it, some stupid people having glass in the back door. But they were nice enough.”

“The young bloke who came to me was spot-on...he was dead friendly and he was dead straight with me...saying there is little chance that we will get person that did it.”

There was a difference between the levels of professionalism demonstrated by individual officers in relation to the type of crime. In general, victims of house breaking expressed a more positive image of the treatment that they had received. Victims of house-breaking were more likely to be told about how the case would progress and were more likely to have been given information about other services that were available to victims of crime (Victim Support etc.).

Overall satisfaction

Overall the respondents expressed satisfaction about the services that they had received from the police. Interestingly, even the respondents who had expressed dissatisfaction about the service that they had received subsequently commented that they had received the best possible response in relation to the perceived ‘limitations’ that the police faced. For example:

“Their hands are tied.” [in relation to repeat young offenders]

“They do the best with the resources that are available to them.”

“The police go to the bother to make the arrest...the court lets them [the accused] walk the next day.”

“The police can do very little about young offenders.”

However, it became evident that there could have been a connection between the victim’s satisfaction and the victim’s prior expectations of services from the police. There may also be a link between satisfaction rates and the levels of crime in the areas where the victims live. Respondents who had been subjected to repeat victimisation had lower expectations about the services they would receive from the police. The majority of respondents expressed some frustration about the criminal justice system in general.
Positive features of the police response were identified as including friendly, sensitive and reassuring officers. Respondents generally commended the professionalism of the police officers they dealt with, though perceptions of professionalism were coloured, to some extent, by the individual’s prior expectations of the services that they would receive from the police. There were also positive reactions to having a designated named contact officer. Response times were considered acceptable (or as expected) in the majority of cases. Many respondents suggested that the police are under-funded and that service provision is limited by lack of resources.

Victims frequently complained about a lack of communication about the progression of the case. Respondents were not normally told about the outcome of ‘their’ court case and there was often a substantial, unexplained delay in getting back personal belongings after the case was closed. In cases of theft of or from motor vehicles, some respondents complained of a lack of communication between police, insurers and victims leading to failure to secure forensic evidence. There were some examples of what was perceived as victim blaming words or behaviour by the police, which in some cases led to feelings of loss, frustration and a sense of disempowerment. A number of examples were given of police officers apparently underestimating levels of individual loss both in practical and emotional terms. For example, an older respondent who had had his bicycle stolen on at least two occasions felt that the police trivialised his loss to some extent. He commented that ‘if I had lost a BMW the police would have taken me seriously’. Similarly, another man commented that the police had shown little interest when he reported that his car had been stolen. However, when another police department caught the criminal trying to use the victim’s Visa cards they acted immediately. This man felt that the police were more interested in crimes against the Visa card company – and that his personal loss was ignored.

CORPORATE VICTIMS

This section looks at the responses given by individual victims of corporate crime.

Reason for reporting the crime

As with the individual victims, respondents were asked to comment on their reasons for contacting the police. The responses demonstrated that although the respondents reported the crime to the police as a standard company procedure, there were considerable differences in the actual reporting procedures, as stipulated by individual company policy.

The evidence from this small-scale focus group would suggest that there were three major reasons why the crimes were reported to the police:

1. Where a crime was committed and the victim has the evidence and is holding the perpetrator, company policy is to prosecute.

2. Where a crime has been committed and damage or loss has occurred as a consequence. The victims do not know who the perpetrator is but they do know the modus operandi and wish to raise police awareness of the issue in the hope of having more police resources to address the identified problem area.
Where a crime had been committed and the victim does not know who is responsible but feels it is important to notify the police in the hope of alerting them of a potentially bigger problem.

For example:

“Obviously, I think it’s very important. If the police don’t know about it there’s not a lot they can do about it. With my manager, we had two break-ins at our garage within the space of two weeks.”

“To report the crime, when I did talk to the police it highlighted that it wasn’t just ourselves it was other dealers within the area that were getting targeted as well. So it was a two-way communication thing, so it kind of highlighted to me that there was a problem going on.”

“Our situation is actually damage to the cars that are parked in the forecourt. And in a week some nights, there was about fifteen, sixteen cars damaged, which is about five, ten thousand pounds... just throwing bottles and bricks and everything.... Security guards were scared to be in the area in case they got hit... for their own safety as well. So we always have to work fairly close with the police to try and get the path patrolled.”

It emerged from the discussion that some crimes go unreported. This can be attributed to several factors such as the location of the property, the type of crime, and the absence of a known perpetrator as the following demonstrate.

“I think from our experience it tends to be that we’ll report it if we’ve got something definite to give them. Like, if we’ve got the shoplifter apprehended or if it’s been something really serious. Whereas, if we’ve just had somebody do a runner, we lose a lot of product that way, but we’ll not necessarily report it because there’s just nothing that we can necessarily give them that would help it. So I mean, I would say that there would be a lot of unreported.”

“We can only call the police when we have apprehended someone who has been caught shoplifting...it’s not enough to suspect someone... we have to catch them and stop them at the door.”

The same respondent commented that “there could be any number of incidents where we’ve had somebody go out and we haven’t necessarily reported it because we don’t know what’s gone, we don’t know what they’ve taken, we don’t know who they were”.

**Response times**

Respondents were asked what was the police’s response time and about how important a quick response time was for their particular situation. Response times were reported to have varied and the speed of the response was determined by several factors, including the time of day, the geographical location of the premises where the crime was committed, the seriousness of the situation, and whether anyone was in any immediate danger. It emerged from the discussions that:
None of the respondents used the emergency services because there was a general acceptance that the situation was not an emergency and that the crime was not committed against an individual.

There was general acceptance that response time will vary considerably.

A practical implication of this is that some crimes regularly go unreported because it would involve a further drain on the business’s resources in terms of staff levels etc.

The following quotations emphasise these points:

“I think with us, because we’re only calling the police when we’ve got the apprehension already, we don’t dial 999. We actually call the station and the response time, it can vary considerably. I mean sometimes it will be a couple of hours before we get an officer down, sometimes it will be like 20-30 minutes only. It just depends on the time of day and how busy it is but, like I say, we’re not using the 999 services.”

“I’m just the same, it just depends on the day whether they’re busy or not. Sometimes it doesn’t matter if we have got somebody and they are quiet and they accept that they are caught… but we do get ones that are rude and quite disruptive. So it can be dangerous sometimes, we have three or four people in the office just to sit with this one person.”

“Because sometimes we haven’t phoned the police just for the fact that if we wait an hour, we’ve got to have three people off the shop not working for the sake of £10 or something; it’s cheaper for us to let them go.”

“Well we’re only about half a mile from the police station, we’re on the same road actually and I think the response time depends on the time, we don’t phone 999, we just phone station but I suppose the strange thing for us is when you’re actually watching these stones coming over, the police just never come quickly enough and half an hour sometimes is a lot of money [respondent from garage which had suffered criminal damage by stones being thrown over a wall].”

However, there was a general acceptance from all respondents that the police’s response time was very much determined by other more immediate priorities as the following comments demonstrate.

“I suppose the thing is it’s not an emergency. For them I suppose priorities are different... there are a lot of things like accidents or somebody being murdered or something I suppose they would attend to that first. I would say sometimes very quick, sometimes it can be thirty minutes, an hour.”

“I don’t think retail crime is particularly much of a high priority it seems but I mean, when you’ve got other stuff going on in Glasgow, it’s pretty much fully understandable really.”
Response received from the police

Respondents were asked about how the police responded. Again there was a general satisfaction that the police responded professionally and appropriately. As one respondent stated:

“I thought it was very good. I mean they’re very much there to support the store team and I wouldn’t say they’re deliberately intimidating the person that was apprehended but it is very much that they’re working with us, they’re working for us to help take this person away.”

Similarly, another observed:

“They have been very keen following up, they’ve been very keen to push hard target, I think it’s hard target or something like that, that the retail crime unit’s doing whereby they send somebody in to talk to staff about how to pick out suspects and how possibly we could deal with it. It’s not something we’ve actually taken up yet, we’re going to put it through the management team and the supervisors first but they have been pushing that quite a lot.”

It is interesting to note that what some individual victims of crime had perceived as ‘victim blaming’ or unsolicited advice from uniformed officers was, in the case of the corporate victims, often interpreted as advice on crime prevention or crime deterrence. This suggests that the police should perhaps adopt a higher level of sensitivity when they are dealing with victims of crime against the individual.

“I mean they’re saying that, of course, if we had the guards on the doors we wouldn’t have half the problems that we do have. We know that but, of course, it’s head office that’s controlling the budget.”

“Exactly the same with us as well. He pointed out a large number of problems; I mean a lot of sort of small common sense things but however I found that very useful.”

“Yes it feels professional. I think that the view, I think they have a high expectation level of their chances of catching the people and I think they felt the same way, they were going through the motions, their fingerprints etc and looking for evidence, etc but I think they were being honest and saying that the likelihood was that they wouldn’t apprehend these people. So it was more a case of crime prevention, to think about that now, rather than trying to apprehend criminals.”

Progress of case / information and liaison

Respondent were asked what had been their experience of communication and liaison with the police in terms of progress reports etc. It became clear that respondent’s reactions to the police follow-up or lack of said, was coloured entirely by their prior expectations of the services that they would receive from the police. There was a degree of sophisticated realism regarding the police follow-up with the majority of respondents having little or no
expectations of continued communication or liaison between themselves and the police. However, although respondents expressed appreciation about the information about crime prevention, some respondents acknowledged that the implementations of the recommendations were often outwith their control.

“We had the crime prevention officer from the local police station come along the following day and he took time to go round the whole building and point out advice for security and even recommend where to go to etcetera to get things done and that was very helpful to me. He phoned me up about a week after just to see if there was anything that I needed assistance with etcetera, talk about. I found that very helpful.”

“Well our situation is that they’ve never caught anyone. So there’s no case, so we wouldn’t and haven’t heard anything after the event.... Obviously, we’re always in the hope that they’re going to catch somebody ...And the police know it’s probably a waste of their time as well to chase them and catch them.”

“I haven’t had a follow up apart from the crime prevention and to be honest, I don’t expect, I would like them to come back with how they’re getting on with it but I realise there’s probably more serious issues and I just feel that they’re probably stretched enough without having to waste their time chasing after the likes of large organisations, small crimes against large companies etc”

In some cases, the respondents expressed surprise at the lengths to which then police had gone in their efforts to solve particular crimes:

“The circumstances are always horrendous, you know, keys left in the car and there was just one opportunist chap just walking about the car lot and sees a car with a set of keys in, so he just gets in and drove off and the car was away for eight or nine months now. After eight or nine months you think they’re never going to get it back and you’ve told the insurance company and everything, the police got it back and there wasn’t much damage with it. We re-sold it, the car was fine. In a case like that, I suppose we thought after, you always expect you’ll get it back within the first couple of weeks and after a couple of weeks you think the thing is going to be burnt out or torched or something. Well they obviously had it on a database and they must have been, they were tracking if for months before they got it.”

Gaps identified in the service

Respondents were asked to identify any gaps in the services, or areas where they thought needed some improvements. There was general consensus that the police were doing the best job possible given the resources that were available to them. All respondents commented that it would be better if there were more police officers on the streets. However, it was also identified that a bigger police presence would only act as a band-aid measure, and that petty crime was the end result of much wider social issues.
“What to do in the future, how to improve things. I think there has to be more money and more police on the street, to let them have more time to do the things that they need to do.”

“And I think probably just the sort of message that comes over is that there’s just not enough resource or budget, I suppose there must be more crime year on year it must be more and more. I don’t know whether there’s more and more police being recruited but there’s crime and drugs. The more police that hang around the better, has to be for everyone.”

Some respondents highlighted what they saw as a need for radical changes to the social justice system. One respondent commented that:

“I think it’s higher up than the police that has to see some changes... to be honest because I think you could go down with a bus in Glasgow Central and pick all these people that are dealing with drugs and stuff but what are they going to do with them? They will be back out next week.”

Other respondents said:

“A lot of the crime that we get is for that, [drug related]) so it would be better if they would have a resource to deal with that. ...rather than trying to mop up the loose ends .... the effect or the result of it would probably be better.”

“A member of staff was threatened with a needle, we got the bloke...the next day he came back into the shop...It’s a no win situation.”

The same respondent commented that:

“They can put them into these hotels and, again, it just causes trouble. So I think it’s that that has to be dealt with first.”

Another said:

“I think it’s pretty much the system that needs to be looked at. I mean, how can we get more of the police out and about and how can we stop just letting people out to do it again the very next day? I think a lot of it’s geared to looking after the bad guy than helping us.”

There was often an acknowledgement of joint responsibility for crime prevention between police and victims of crime. For example:

“So it’s, who does take responsibility for it? And I mean, we can say that we’d like to see more police on the street to deal with the people that are coming into the stores and taking from us, and they can say well, you’ve got all these people coming into the stores to take from you, what are you going to do about it? And they’re right and we’re right and it would be great to see more police on the street dealing with what’s happening out there and they’re right in saying that we should be more proactive about stopping it getting in.”
There was general agreement that petty crime against corporate victims put a large drain on the already stretched police system. As this respondent commented:

“I’d prefer the police to be concentrating resources on preventing drug pushing and things like that. I understand that if I was going to get a choice in the likes of that, that would be first on somebody’s mind.”

Overall there was a general agreement that the police have exhibited and maintained a high level of professionalism when dealing with corporate crime.

**Overall satisfaction**

Respondents expressed a high level of overall satisfaction. There was a unanimous acknowledgement that the police offer the best possible service under the circumstances. However, there was also a unanimous agreement that services could be improved by a larger police presence. Good practice was measured in terms of resources available and the associated limitations. None of the respondents were critical of the services received from the police, however criticism was directed at specific aspects of the criminal justice system.
CHAPTER FIVE  INTERVIEWS WITH INDIVIDUAL VICTIMS

REPORTING THE INCIDENT

Reason for reporting the crime

When asked why they had reported the crimes to the police, many respondents claimed to have done so because they understand that course of action to be appropriate when faced with being the victim of a crime. Typical comments included:

“It was my first reaction; there was no one else that I could have called.”

“Items of property had been stolen and basically, the property had been vandalised so it was a police matter.”

“There was a crime committed against me.”

“Well it was a crime that needed to be reported to the police because there’s a lot of it happening.”

“Because you have to report a crime, we are told this all our lives, it’s the only way we can support the police.”

For some respondents, practical issues such as potential insurance claims as a result of theft or damage were important:

“I thought it was the right thing to do, and of course for insurance purposes. They usually get a constable number or something.”

Some respondents felt that it was their duty to report crimes in order to try to assist the police in reducing the numbers of offenders by apprehending them:

“Well, to me, if you don’t report it, you’re just giving the ones that’s doing it plenty of scope to carry on doing it. It’s costing you money every time; I don’t touch the insurance like. I’ve got full comp and I’ve never claimed yet and I don’t intend to if possible.”

“Because of the nature of the crime and I wanted the person to be caught.”

For other victims issues of the security of property were viewed as important;

“My husband called the police because the patio door was broken.”

“I got home from my daughter’s house and realised that someone had broken into the garage.”

Other victims were unaware of the crimes against them until they were informed by the police:
“The police contacted me to tell me that my car was broken into.”

“The police contacted me in the middle of the night to tell me that my car was broken into.”

**Method of reporting the crime**

When asked the method of reporting the crime to the police, 86% (24) of personal interviewees had done so by telephone. Two had been informed of the crime by the police and one had reported by visiting the local police station in person.

Only three respondents had utilised the 999 emergency service to report the incident with reasons for doing so given as below:

“*That’s the easiest one to use basically, you get dealt with quicker. That’s what I’ve always been told.*”

“*Because I felt a mad sort of urgency and if I did 999 there was a better chance of the criminal being caught ... and also, I considered it to be an emergency.*”

“I phoned the emergency services, 999, who put me through to my local police station.”

Reasons for phoning local police stations directly rather than using the 999 service were:

“That was the most convenient for me.”

“The most convenient because I’ll tell you why, my windows were knocked in so we had to phone and that’s when we discovered my garage was broken into at the same time.”

“I always feel like 999 is really for real emergencies.”

“Yes, I mean I was there so I just used the phone. It’s not an emergency getting your motor done. If you need an ambulance or something like that, that’s when you use 999, not for any other reason. If somebody appears next door with guns or something, then I probably would use 999.”

“I would never use the emergency service’s time in this way. They get loads of calls from people who report this type of stuff ... wasting their time.”

The vast majority of respondents stated that using the telephone to report the crime was by far the most convenient method. One respondent who had personally visited the police station to make his report had unfortunately destroyed potential evidence by cleaning up his car that had been broken into and then using it to drive to the police station.
Direct involvement with the crime and perceived threat to self and others

Victims were asked whether they were directly involved in the crime themselves. Eleven percent (3) replied that they had been in bed at the time their homes had been broken into while the other 90% (25) reported that they were not personally involved. Two of the victims who had been personally involved reported that they felt that they might have been in danger at the time:

“After it had happened you do think of this because he was influenced by drugs and drink. It’s quite easy to imagine what could have happened if he had ventured further into the house because he had entered in through the kitchen and the living room’s off the kitchen, and it would have been quite easy, because I just felt if he was brazen enough to enter the house at that time of night, put the lights on in the house, he’s quite capable of coming upstairs.” (female victim of domestic housebreaking)

“Yes of course we were. If we woke up when the burglar was in the house, who could say what could have happened.” (male victim of domestic housebreaking).

The third of these three victims reported that he had not felt that he had been in danger.

Respondents were asked about what they perceived to have been the biggest threat to themselves or others at the time of the incident. Some respondents had experienced fear of injury or assault to themselves or other parties as follows:

“I was pretty scared for my daughter, that was the biggest threat. I was fearful, you know. That was the only thing. In fact, she ended up going to Australia for three years to get away. She’s home now, but she had to go because she was getting frightened.” (male, vehicle and property offences and threats).

“My husband actually chased him.”.

“Well, as I said it was very difficult to say what could have happened if we disturbed the crook ... he could have been crazy with drugs or something.” (male victim of domestic housebreaking).

“I suppose that the young boys about could have set the car on fire, which would have been dangerous.” (female victim of vehicle related crime).

Other respondents reported that the biggest threat for them was fear of further victimisation:

“There was no obvious threat to me or my wife personally, but it did worry us about people breaking in, you know, we were very concerned after it happened twice. We weren’t concerned that that particular offender might return, but basically just for future offences that might occur.” (79 year-old male victim of domestic housebreaking).
“The biggest concern was, because we live in a, it’s a common stairwell, the door downstairs is constantly open, they have people coming and going at any time. The biggest concern really was, could it happen again basically. Yes, definitely because we’re on the top floor, it’s quite hard for anybody to see what’s going on, basically.” (23 year-old female victim of domestic housebreaking)

“I think the first time I just thought, oh, you know, but as for the second time I just kept feeling, is this going to keep going on and on? And I didn’t really feel that anything was getting done about it. So I suppose the threat of it keep on continuing to happen..” (24 year-old victim of vehicle-related offence).

“Keys were taken from a lock-up garage, which could have meant a further crime.” (52 year-old female repeat victim of vehicle-related crime)

When asked if they had made their concerns about their personal safety clear to the police, 48% claimed that they had done so with statements which included:

“Oh, yes, they knew about it, they knew about it, but they couldn’t prove it unless somebody actually seen them doing it. They know too who did it, but, as I say, they couldn’t prove unless somebody was there to see it.” (68 year-old male victim of vehicle related offence).

“Yes I did, I actually went up and XXX Police Station was really good and they came out with a female and a male and the male was fingerprinting the car and the female was speaking to myself and my mum.” (24 year-old female victim of domestic housebreaking).

“Yes, because we both got a clear sighting of what he looked like.” (30 year-old female victim of domestic housebreaking).

“Yes, I did, I explained that my daughter was very upset and that I was very concerned for her at the time.” (64 year-old male victim of domestic housebreaking).

“Yes I reported that I had discovered that my house had been broken into on returning from work.” (32 year-old female victim of domestic housebreaking).

Of those who did not make this clear, 8 (29%) respondents claimed that the police had never asked that sort of question. For example:

“No, I was never asked that question: they only wanted to know where the car was parked.”

“No, I don’t think they were interested in that anyway.”
Response times

With regard to response times, personal victims experienced a variety of responses and expressed numerous opinions. Thirteen respondents (47%) reported a response in the form of a police presence on the scene within half-an-hour, some within minutes:

“Very quick, yes very quick. I must admit yes, very quick. They were here just within minutes.”

“They were with us within half an hour of the call.”

“They were actually very quick, it was within half an hour and the police were sort of there, I was at work, I realised first thing in the morning and I was just driving to work and I realised that the passenger side of the car had been damaged and things had been taken. So when I got to work I phoned them and within half an hour they were there, it was quite quick.”

“Well, between the phone call and them arriving back to our house was about twenty minutes.”

“The police were marvellous; they appeared in about ten minutes ... about thirty minutes later the CID appeared and the crime prevention officer. I was very impressed by the standard of service that we received from all concerned.”

“They were there within 15 minutes, they were very fast.”

A further 7 respondents (25%) reported a presence within ‘a few hours’ as follows while 5 (18%) reported a slow response which sometimes required a further call to the police before officers attended the scene:

“I’m trying to think now, because I went up to the police station that day too I gave my details and it was a good, maybe about a week, a week and a bit later before I actually got someone contacting me.”

“They were very slow to respond, perhaps about three hours. They were very busy I suppose.”

I had to call them twice before they came, so it seemed very long.

“Two uniformed officers arrived at my house just over four hours later.”

The three other victims had been initially informed of the crime by the police as opposed to discovering it themselves and so, consequently, there was no recordable delay in response.

It is interesting to note that most victims appeared to have had a fairly low expectation with regard to response times since only five (18%) reported that response times were their main concern at the time of reporting the incident. Those for whom this was the case made the following comments:
“It was really my main concern in the morning, yes. But I mean it was done quite quickly so it wasn’t a major concern, I never got to the stage where I was really concerned about it.”

“Yes, I was concerned that the car would be stolen if left unattended and unsecured. Therefore speed of response was important to me.”

“Yes speed was quite important because you are advised not to tamper with anything until the police appear.”

“Yes, of course it was. I was concerned for my daughter because she was already worried as my wife was in hospital getting a heart by-pass operation, as you can imagine, this put the tin hat on it for her.”

The majority of victims were less concerned about the speed of response and took more pragmatic views:

“No, I wasn’t concerned because the event had already happened, and on both occasions the police reaction was excellent.”

“No, just to see how quick they got up to see if they could get them, to see if they could catch them, but they couldn’t get hold of them. I think they had a car or something, they must have gone off in a car quick.”

“At that time everything was just a complete blur because of what had happened, I was quite upset. So the time response wasn’t really an issue to me. I knew that it would probably be around about that time if not longer. So no, it wasn’t really an issue to me I would say. I think it was really just trying to find out what had been taken.”

“No, it didn’t really bother me. I wasn’t in a hurry for anything.”

“No, I didn’t really care either way, the deed was done already.”

Response received from the police

In all but one case two officers attended the scene of crime. On the other occasion a single police officer attended to take a statement. There appeared to be three broad areas of response experienced:

1. Those respondents who felt that the initial response had been a satisfactory one from their point of view.

2. Those who expressed an accepting but ambivalent attitude towards the response.

3. Those who had experienced some degree of dissatisfaction with the initial response.
Comments made by the first group of respondents included:

“Basically, they asked, obviously, what the situation was. When they arrived here they were actually very good because I was in a bit of a state. They were quite calm in that sense and basically, they were just asking what had been taken, different questions like that because it was a rather bizarre break in that we had, we were quite baffled by it as well. I mean I think I had a level head in a certain sense because my dad is a police officer also. It gave me a bit of an advantage to it and I don’t know, they were very good, I have to admit because initially we had a police officer and then two officers from CID came after that.” (23 year-old female victim of domestic housebreaking).

“The first, well we had a few visits that night from them. So in the twenty minutes it was one officer coming back to let us know that another two officers had caught him.” (30 year-old female victim of domestic housebreaking).

“They were fantastic. They checked the whole house and the garden looking for evidence I think. They made sure that the whole house was safe and secure; the joiner boy from crime prevention replaced the window immediately. The special policeman took some fingerprints and some stuff from the kitchen.” (64 year-old male victim of domestic housebreaking).

“They were sympathetic to me and were really very nice.” (19 year-old female victim of vehicle related crime).

“The police were very good; they took fingerprints and explained that there had been a spate of similar incidents in the area at the time.” (50 year-old female victim of both types of crime).

The experiences of the second group included:

“They were okay, polite and didn’t give much hope of a resolution, for example getting the car back.” (47 year-old male victim of vehicle related crime).

“They took a statement from me and inspected the damage to my car.” (21 year-old female victim of vehicle related crime).

“They simply took down my details and then they left.” (36 year-old male victim of vehicle related crime).

“One officer came and took my details and then just left.” (28 year-old victim of vehicle related crime).

For the third group who expressed some dissatisfaction the following were some of the comments made about the initial response:

“Very little.” (24 year-old victim of vehicle related crime).
“One uniformed, yes and then two CID came up after and took the prints. They said they were quite happy, they got plenty of prints, which didn’t do me a lot of good.” (54 year-old male domestic housebreaking victim).

“They just took my details as usual, and said that they would be in touch if they found someone for the crime, but one officer advised me ‘not to hold my breath’ waiting for the criminal to be caught, it happens a lot around here and it is usually related to drugs in some way.” (42 year-old male victim of vehicle related crime).

“To be honest, I think they thought that I was a bit stupid for driving the car and all that ... they took some details and then they sent an officer to my house later that night to check for other evidence ... I did feel stupid ... but I just reacted to what happened, someone had been at my stuff.” (56 year-old male victim of both vehicle and property crimes).

Participant were asked if they had been advised by the police as to how their case would be progressed. Again, this question provoked three broad areas of response from victims:

1. Those who were able to confirm that they had been informed of the manner in which the case would be progressed.
2. Those who reported that they had been given a partial explanation.
3. Those who claimed that they had received no explanation of the procedures by the police at all.

The first group (25%) of seven respondents supplied some comments as follows:

“Well, they sort of told us they would try their best to get the person responsible for it. I don’t think they got, well we had lawyers and that with the case and everything, but we didn’t get anywhere. I think they were a bad lot, they were a bad lot.” (68 year-old male victim of vehicle related crime).

“Yes, the CID officer told me what they would be doing.” (64 year-old male domestic housebreaking victim).

In the second group more cautious comments were made by respondents:

“He told me that he would be in touch if he needed any further information.” (28 year-old female victim of vehicle related offence).

“They said that someone from the CID would either phone or call round.” (32 year-old female domestic housebreaking victim).

“I don’t know, I can’t recall. They certainly ... the detective went to the scene immediately and examined it and the police officer took copious notes of what had happened.” (79 year-old male victim of domestic housebreaking).
The third group who claimed that they had been supplied with no explanation of the manner in which the case would be progressed comprised 15 respondents (54%) who made the following comments:

“No, they just said that they would be in touch if there were any developments.” (21 year-old female victim of vehicle related crime).

“No, they never mentioned anything like that.” (26 year-old female, both property and vehicle crimes).

“No, not at all, they didn’t explain anything.” (19 year-old female victim of vehicle related crime).

“No, they just said they’d get somebody up to take prints off it and that.” (54 year-old male victim of domestic housebreaking).

Despite the low levels of explanation of how their cases would be progressed, respondents displayed relatively low levels of concern about this. Only nine (32%) respondents in this cohort felt that it would have been helpful to have received more information from the police with regard to how their cases would be progressed. Comments made included:

“Yes, I would have liked to have been told what I should do next, this was the first time anything like this has happened to me.”

“Yes, I would have liked him to help me a bit more, but I suppose they were very busy.”

“Yes, [I would have liked to know more about] the chances of finding the perpetrators of the crime.”

“Yes, I would have liked to know a bit more about what to do, it was my first car and I had never had any trouble before so I didn’t have a clue what to do next.”

“It might have helped having a timescale of how long it would generally take but it’s still ongoing now, it must be still ongoing because I haven’t heard anything else from them. So, you know, roughly about how long it would take.”

The majority of respondents however (19 [68%]) reported that they were content with the information as supplied by the police, making such comments as:

“I was satisfied that all my questions were answered, they were here for about an hour ... maybe even more.”

“I just wanted to get the whole thing over with and get back to bed.”

“I was satisfied with what was happening.”

“I didn’t expect them to do much.”
“Not necessarily at that point, everything was explained quite well there and then. They were really quite efficient in that sense there. So no, that would have been fine.”

“No, I think they covered everything. I felt that they were all very helpful at that stage.”

Respondents were asked to express the degree of satisfaction they felt regarding the police response to the reporting of the incident. Four (14%) of the cohort felt unreservedly very satisfied, making comments which included:

“Very satisfied. They couldn’t have been more helpful.”

The group of 21 respondents who reported being satisfied made comments including:

“I don’t think they could have done anything else.”

“Satisfied. There was not much more that he could have done.”

“Satisfied. I was satisfied that they seemed to be doing everything that they could, but they told me not to hold out much hope that my goods would be recovered.”

“Satisfied- they were very helpful, they were very good. I’ll give them their due for that.”

“Satisfied- nothing really to add to that regarding the initial response. It’s just really the after side of it that could have been followed up slightly better.”

The group that reported that they were not satisfied at all (3 respondents, or 11%) made the following comments:

“Not satisfied at all. Nothing came out of it and I was left wondering what happened.”

“Not satisfied at all. As I said, the second time I got broken into, this time I had a different stereo and the face of the stereo comes off, all that was left was the back of the stereo and I got broken into the same way with a key and the only thing that got taken was the back of the stereo, which would be no use to anybody whatsoever. Again, it was a kind of personal thing and again, XXXX police station said it was more of a personal thing. My trainers, which I’d worn, had been taken as well, so it’s just things like that. Again, I had to phone up and find out who was the officer dealing with this particular case and he was quite helpful. At first he said he’d speak to the one that was supposed to be dealing with the other one and I said, would you please let me know what happens and he said, yes and he never got back to me. Because I don’t even know when they actually spoke to him, if it was for the first one or the second one.”
One respondent who was a repeat victim said that she had received very different treatment on different occasions, having received satisfactory treatment on one occasion but completely unsatisfactory treatment on another occasion.

The respondents were asked if they got all of the help that they felt they needed. Of these 20 (72%) replied that they were satisfied, and their comments included:

“Yes, I’m not asking for any help at the moment. I think I’m just waiting to get calls from them really, you know, because I’ve got property, they found some of my property and they said that when it was resolved they would send me a letter to go and collect the property and that hasn’t happened as yet.”

“I don’t believe I need any help.”

“Yes, considering that I had messed everything else up, the officers were great ... I think they had a laugh at me but that was understandable.”

One elderly respondent was slightly confused about the help he was getting and responded:

“Well, that’s a dodgy one. I wouldn’t say we were getting all the help that we could get, we’re getting some.”

When asked to explain further he replied:

“It’s hard to say, but I mean, I think a presence, they have stepped up their presence in the street recently and being around on patrol but I mean they can only do that, I appreciate they can only do that for so long. I mean that is helping but the minute they stop I would reckon they’ll [the offenders] be starting within the next week or two.”

Five respondents (18%) reported that they had not received all the help they needed including such comments as:

“No, they were not helpful at all.”

“No, I would have liked to have some questions answered, but you don’t like to ask too many questions.”

“No, I mean the only thing I got was for my insurance. ... So the only help I really got from them was the incident number so I could claim my insurance, but apart from that, I didn’t get any help from the second one, that was even worse than the first one.” [This respondent had been the victim of repeat vehicle related crime]

When respondents were asked about whether they have experienced any problems as a result of the crime many initially replied ‘No’ but went on to qualify their answers as follows:

“No, not really, we had some inconvenience to replace some objects but that’s why we have insurance.”
“No, just the expense of the clean up.”

“No, it’s just as I said earlier, we were a bit concerned, you know, a wee bit unsure about future possible break-ins.”

“No, not now, no. For a while we was kind of worried and one thing or another, what was going to happen next.”

“No, just the inconvenience and of course now I have my new reputation as the village idiot.”

Other respondents were less reticent about discussing the problems that had arisen for them as a result of the incidents and made the following comments:

“The initial couple of weeks after it, it was an ordeal to be left in the house myself. I wouldn’t stay in the house myself at night and things like that.”

“Well, it was obviously quite upsetting and financial, yes because I’m a student.”

“I had to get the window replaced and I lost my no claims bonus.”

“I wasted a lot of time on the phone after it all trying to get the car back on the road.”

“Yes, well we only ... we had bought the house in September and this is us now selling the house. ...to this day we don’t know what happened to him and also it’s not very pleasant going to your bed at night and wakening up every five minutes thinking every creak is him again.”

The main problems experienced by the victims interviewed appeared to be

1. Fear of further victimisation, which was greatly exacerbated in instances where victims had not been informed as to the outcome of cases.

2. The financial losses incurred.

3. Inconvenience caused which was disruptive and made it difficult for victims to get on with their lives and move on from the offence.

Respondents were asked about the costs (both financial and psychological) to themselves and families resulting from the offences and made the following comments:

“It would probably about £1700 ... With regards to the jewellery, it was all 21st birthday presents ... so that was obviously sentimental ...the computer had been given as a present for moving through to Edinburgh, my mum and dad had paid for it so it was really upsetting. Yes it does have implications mentally on you.”
“I’d say probably about £1000. ... psychologically, I don’t know if this person [the offender] has been spoken to or not so I’m very wary of going out obviously and realising that if he’s been contacted about this crime, he might not be very happy.”

“Well it cost about roughly £300. ... I was a bit down about it, I suppose I was a bit actually. It was my car, so I was a bit upset and a bit scared to drive it for a while. So it’s a bit scary leaving it outside the house again, thinking if it was going to happen again or not.”

“There was no cost financially and I wouldn’t even put an estimate on how it’s affected us. ... I would never have moved from this area if it hadn’t been for that. ... and also the fact that we know what he looks like and there’s a possibility we could bump into him.”

“In financial terms, a few hundred pounds I suppose. In practical terms, I suppose it was the inconvenience of the whole thing. I lost a day of work and I had to arrange alternative transport for a few days.”

“The cost of replacing some items was high but it is the emotional stuff that can’t be replaced so easily. Things like a telly and stuff can be replaced but I lost my mother’s wedding ring and that had sentimental value to me; you can’t replace that stuff. My daughter doesn’t like to stay home alone now either.”

“The financial cost was scary. I had to get all the locks and the ignition changed too. I never felt right driving it again so I had to get rid of it. [When asked by the interviewer if the victim had obtained a replacement car, the following reply was given] No, I can’t afford another car, I had to pay a garage to take the old one away.”

“I repaired most of the damage myself and the insurance sorted the rest ... it was just the shock of finding out that someone else had been in my garage.”

As may be observed from the comments above, the financial costs of the crime were in a number of instances viewed by victims as easier to cope with and overcome than the inconvenience, or more importantly the loss of items of emotional value which were viewed by respondents as irrereplaceable. In addition, several victims reported a loss of the previous sense of security that they had experienced and said that they had become fearful of repeat offending. In one instance this was so serious that the family was attempting to sell its home in order to move away from the area.

In the majority of cases (18, 65%) respondents felt that the costs of crime borne by the community must be high. As one respondent remarked:

“... I suppose psychologically, it’s a bit hard to see they’re worrying about it but I think people do kind of feel disappointed.”

While another respondent said:

“On the community, I think it was a shock because neighbours that I had
spoken to said that they had lived in the area for years and it was always children breaking into huts, never houses.”

Others claimed:

“Oh, I think the cost must be increasing ... we read all the petty crime that’s going on, which involves a lot of police time. So the costs are bound to be increasing.”

“I think the cost of crime to the community is very high in terms of wasting police resources, the police have to spend time chasing small crimes like this, and all the paperwork involved, which means that they have less time to catch criminals.”

“Well it puts a drain on the local police force who already have their hands full ... the usual is you can’t get a policeman when you want one because they are out chasing stuff like this ... it’s a waste of time.”

In general, the respondents exhibited sympathy for the police in having to pursue what they saw as hopeless tasks. As may be expected, respondents had a variety of views on the general level of service that they had received from the police. Some of the negative opinions included:

“I’m not very satisfied at all, they didn’t take it any further as far as I know: the person that committed the crime is still walking about doing the same things.”

“Really disappointed. I mean I’ve always been brought up to think that the police are the people to help you and good people and all this type of thing. ... and just to let me know what’s going on.”

Repeat victims reported that they had received very different treatment on different occasions and procedures and been generally inconsistent between cases:

“On the first occasion, I felt that the officers handling the case seemed a bit more alert and brighter, but on the second occasion, I was not impressed at all.”

Other respondents expressed opinions praising the police as follows:

- The service was spot on, that’s all I can say.
- I thought they were very helpful, more than I had expected of them really.
- Excellent, first class. We have a small station here and the police are very friendly and they dealt with the problems we had very efficiently.
- Well as far as the service goes they were really very helpful. They were very nice and came up and tried their best. We had the CID and everything up and they were very good.
• The service was very good. They knew what they were doing in regards to the situation at hand. ... However, the follow up service could have been better.

PROGRESS OF THE CASE

Information and liaison

A relatively small number (10) of respondents reported that they had been told about the kind of evidence that the police would need and how they would go about obtaining it. Comments by those who had been so informed included:

“Yes, I was told that the police would look for forensic evidence and that they would be checking what they found against all their other records.”

“They told me they would be looking for forensic evidence ... like blood or fingerprints and stuff on the glass.”

“Well, they only told us that you needed witnesses to see who did it, that way they could charge them.”

“Basically they initially took, for the computer, a lot of ... serial numbers and descriptions of the jewellery ... they told us that they would be looking into pawnbroker and things along that line.”

“They tried for fingerprints both times. The first police officer I spoke to for the first crime, he said that he had checked around second hand shops to see if there was anything, similar stereos coming up.”

“DNA samples were taken from the house. ... Fingerprints as well as DNA.”

Those who claimed that they had not been informed said:

“Not really, they just said ’we’ll go round about and see if anybody had seen anything. [the interviewer reminded the respondent that he had stated earlier that the police had taken fingerprints, to which the respondent replied] Yes, they did, they did get a lot of fingerprints but they’ve never been back to tell me.”

“No, what’s the point in that? It was a broken window ... we all know that they never catch the ones that did it.”

“No I wasn’t told either about the kind of evidence nor how they intended to try and collect it.”

“No, that’s not our business to know that kind of stuff ... too many people say ’what are they [police] doing about such and such ... I say let them get on with it.”
Respondents were asked if they had been informed by the police that they would be kept in touch with progress. Fourteen respondents (50%) reported that they had been informed at the time of the offence by officers verbally. The respondents had been given different levels of expectation by officers:

“They mentioned to us if they, basically, found anything that they would be in touch with us, but other than that we weren’t told if they would keep us up to date with what was going on.”

“Yes, I was told that and I asked, especially the second one, I asked, could you please get back to me because the first one I haven’t and that didn’t happen.”

“Well initially yes, we were certainly led to believe we would be and we were also led to believe that it was an instant open and closed case because there was so much evidence against him.”

“Yes, they said, ‘If we hear anything, we’ll let you know.’”

“They promised to tell me if anything developed, but never got back to me.”

Asked if the police had in fact kept them in touch with information about the progress about the case 21 (75%) respondents said that this had not happened. Their comments included:

“That was the last I heard from anyone.”

“I had to find out from him, that’s the scary thing, you know, you find out from the person you’ve accused and it’s not very nice.”

“No, I never heard from them again until they called me to take part in this research.”

“No I never heard from them again, I don’t know why they gave you my name as a contact.”

“No, that was about four months ago and I haven’t heard a thing from them.”

The participants were asked if they had themselves contacted the police to find out what progress was being made on the case and if so, how that request was responded to. It was found that 5 respondents (18%) had taken the initiative to ask for a progress report and had the following comments to make:

“I phoned them just to find out what the situation was basically. It just seemed that at that stage nothing had been recovered or information had been found, so it was just trying to continue with it basically. I think they did take it quite seriously.”

“I mean I went to the police station and they were really helpful and they were like, we will do it, if it was us [the victim had involved two police stations in the crime and felt that now neither really wanted ownership of the crime] we
would go round and say, right, but of course, the second police station didn’t even get in touch with me, I just phoned them.”

“The response has been ‘It’s out of our hands now. We can’t tell you anything, contact the courts.’”

“They were always polite and told me what I needed to know.”

“I did call once but I felt that they brushed me off.”

When asked if they had a ‘named officer’ who would deal with their case throughout the enquiry, 11 (40%) reported that they had. Of these, 7 respondents said they were happy with this situation. For example:

“This was very useful; it’s a nice friendly approach and meant that I could become familiar with how the system works.”

“It was very helpful to speak to someone who knows you.”

“If I was to phone up I wouldn’t know who I would be talking to or whether they knew what I was talking about. So having someone who knew who I was, yes... it was a reference point.”

Other respondents were less than happy with the arrangement, with one, for example, saying that:

“When I phoned up and asked about, can I speak to the, I can’t even remember his name now, and asked to speak to the officer they said he’s on holiday just now and I’d call back and “well actually he’s not here, he should be in tomorrow”, and then I’d call back and it would be “well no he’s not here just now.” It would be just ridiculous excuses that didn’t even make sense because one minute he’s on holiday, the next he’s actually there. So I felt that was kind of unhelpful too”.

Those respondents who had not been given a named officer to deal with expressed their views as follows:

“As I said earlier it’s a very small station and if I wanted to I’d just go in and personally ask them. It’s just down the road from me.”

“I thought it was pile of shit. I thought it was very bad on their part, very, very lackadaisical, not intending to do anything, or not wanting to bother, to come away with a pile of shit like that.”

“I didn’t think about it much at the time, but thinking back it would have been easier if they had given me a contact name that I could have phoned.”

“I think it would have been very useful to have that service.”
“That would have been a good idea, it would save you repeating your story over and over.”

Respondents were asked if they had been informed about other sources of support available to them as a victim of crime. Fifteen respondents (54%) reported they had not been given such information. The twelve who had been informed, reported as follows:

“Yes, I was told about Victim Support but I decided not to use them.”

“Yes, they told me about the crime prevention officer who would help to advise me how to prevent it happening again.”

“Yes, they told me about Victim Support ... I wasn’t really interested. They also told me about extra security and stuff, my house is off the main road... it wouldn’t help to have alarms fitted, no one would see it.”

“I was told about Victim Support, but I decided it wasn’t necessary to contact them. I’d also, previously, had a visit from a crime prevention officer after an earlier event, and they sort of went over the property and gave me advice on security arrangements.”

“Well somebody did get in contact with us. It wasn’t,... it was more for the shed, but we said no, not to bother... because we thought, what difference could it make, we didn’t think at the time.”

“Yes, I mean, they offered counselling services if we needed those. ... we were obviously told about why it had been easy to get through our door and this and that, and they advised us to change the locks there and get the communal door fixed but there’s five other flats here and it’s quite hard work to get that done. I mean, everybody say’s they’ll agree to it, but then when it comes down to the matter of money, it’s a case of no, I can’t do that.”

“I went down and seen them {Victim Support} down in the halls, down the town... they do a stand on a Thursday or a Friday ... I was going to go back down and see them again.”

Participants were asked if it would have been useful to have been told about other services available to victims of crime. Only four respondents (14%) claimed that such information would have been useful. They commented:

“Yes, it would have been good when my house was broken into, I have two small children and I was left feeling very vulnerable, maybe it would have helped to have made me less vulnerable.”

“Yes, I would have liked to have been told anything at that time, I hadn’t a clue.”

“Yes, I think it would have helped if they had provided me with a contact for someone at Victim Support, especially at the time of the incident, as I was very upset and it took me quite a while to get over it.”
When asked if they had been informed about crime prevention or safety/security procedures nine respondents (32%) reported that they had been, with one respondent commenting:

“They told me to try and park where there is more light, but I told them that often there was no choice and that you had to take what was available.”

Another respondent (who was a repeat victim) reported having been advised that her car had been broken into because she had parked it with the driver's door adjacent to the pavement and if she was to park with the passenger door by the pavement, it would be less likely to happen again. Other respondents commented:

“Yes, it might have been but I'm not sure that it would have made any difference.”

“Well I had security lights installed already and that didn’t deter the thief.”

Asked how those who had received information about security had made use of it, they reported:

“I got the locks changed on my house and got a burglar alarm.”

“I changed all my point of entry and exit locks. The windows are all covered by window locks.”

“I’ve got one of these alarm things, I bought one of them ... we’ve got deadlocks, the windows all locked and everything.”

“Well, I was provided with a little kit, which included a pen to mark all your things in case it happened again.”

Other changes to security measures resulting from the crime were reported as follows:

“I try to park in the most well lit part of the road now. I am more careful and a bit more aware of car theft.”

“I have had an alarm fitted to my car and I’m being a bit more vigilant I suppose.”

“We put deadlocks on the front and back door. We also put contact alarms on the back windows, the back door and the front door and security lights also. We also put a gate up at the side of the house.”

Respondents were asked to comment on whether they think the responsibility for their property is solely that of the owner, or whether the police are responsible as public servants, whether it is a matter of joint responsibility of yourself and the police as public servants, or whether they had other views. Thirteen respondents (48%) felt that it was a joint responsibility between themselves and the police. Their comments included:

“Well, I feel maybe it’s a joint, I mean I’ve done as much as I possibly can to make sure my car is secure.”
“Joint responsibility, I am mostly responsible but we pay taxes for the police services. It must be their responsibility to keep the streets safe.”

“Joint responsibility. That’s why the police are there, to keep the streets safe to park your car.”

Fourteen (52%) of respondents felt the responsibility was entirely theirs. Their comments included:

“I’d probably say myself, because I don’t really think the police can be everywhere at the same time, because if they are in this street, there’s probably someone two streets along getting burgled.”

CRIMES THAT WERE SOLVED

Nine respondents had initially stated that the crimes that had been committed against them had been solved. However, it became evident as the interviews progressed that many of the respondents did not really know about the final outcome of their individual cases. The following quotations illustrate this:

“No, they didn’t even tell me that they got someone for the crime, I had to find that out from a neighbour whose car was also done the same night. I called the station and they told me nothing.”

“They explained that the people that they arrested were being charged and that a report was being sent to the Procurator Fiscal’s office and that it would be up to them to decide whether or not to bring a prosecution.”

“Some young lad was taken to court but I don’t know how he got on in court. The police advised me to look at the local papers but I never saw a thing.”

Final outcome of the case

When asked about the final outcome of the case seven respondents commented that they did not know the final outcome. Others made assumptions about the outcome of the case. One respondent assumed that because of the time that had elapsed since the crime had been committed, coupled with the fact that he had never been given any other information from the police, the case must be closed:

“As far as I know it must be because I’ve never heard any more. It must be six or seven years ago now since anything happened, as far as the house goes and the car, 1996 I think was the last time.”

Another respondent made assumptions that the case was still on going based on the fact that the stolen goods had not been returned:

“Well, I understand that, ... the only reason I understand that, is that they haven’t said ‘look the case has finished and come and collect your stuff’.”
When asked if they had ever been informed that the case had been closed all the respondents commented that they had never been officially informed. Respondents were then asked if it would have been useful to be given information about the case in terms of closure, and again there was a unanimous agreement that it would have been helpful to be given this information. Similarly, when asked who should have the responsibility of passing this kind of information to victims every respondent felt that that responsibility belonged to the police.

Comments included:

“I think it’s, somebody certainly should keep you informed. I think perhaps the police because I think more of a customer service point of view, if they’ve dealt with it initially I think they should follow it through.”

“Yes, the police should have told me something.”

“The police, I would think in the circumstances.”

Respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the final outcome of the case. Only five people commented and they all stated that they were not satisfied with the final outcome:

“Unsatisfied, as a victim don’t feel as though my feelings were considered.”

“Well, I didn’t expect that it would be a happy ending these things never are, but I would have felt better if the whole thing had been better explained to me.”

**Information sharing about other criminal justice agencies**

Of the nine respondents who commented that the crimes were solved, six respondents commented that the police did not explain the role of other criminal justice agencies. However, when asked if this information would have been useful to them only four respondents said that it would have been helpful to be given this information. One respondent commented that:

“Yes, if it meant that I would have known the proper way to proceed…I mean the person I spoke to on the phone told me that I shouldn’t be asking them about it…I think she told me to call the court…I can’t remember.”

The other five respondents felt that it was not necessary to be given this type of information. Some comments included:

“I don’t think that information would have helped me in any way.”

Similarly:

“No, I know all that stuff anyway.”
Crimes that were not solved

There was a great deal of confusion about the cases that were not solved. Many respondents had made assumptions that the case was closed because they had never been given information from the police about the enquiry. Similarly, many respondents assumed that the case was ongoing because they had never been given information to the contrary. Of the 19 respondents who stated that the case was not solved none had been given official confirmation that the case was closed. When asked if it would have been helpful to have been told that the case was closed seven respondents felt that it would have been useful to be given this information, suggesting that knowing this information would give them a sense of closure:

“Yes, it would have been helpful to know if they caught someone or not.”

“Yes maybe then it would have stopped playing on my mind so much.”

“Yes, I think it would have been yes. We don’t know that it’s closed, I’ve never heard nothing. It’s so funny, I just said to my wife the other day we’ve never seen none of them going about for years now, wherever they are. “

“Yes, it would have given some closure to the situation, yes.”

Only two respondents stated that it would not have been useful, stating that it would have no effect on the resolution of the case:

“Not really, I can’t see how it would have made any difference… the deed was done.”

“I can’t see what difference it would have made to me.”

Respondents were asked about what other information they would have welcomed at this stage. Better communication about how the case was progressing was mentioned ten times. For example:

“I would like to know what is happening to the whole thing…I don’t understand why they have never caught the person using my credit card.”

“It would have been nice to know if anything had happened and if they had found out who was responsible.”

“I would have like to have some kind of communication about how it was going, I keep looking at laddies here thinking…was it him.”

“I would have liked to know if the police had got someone for the crime…or even that the police had given up on the case.”

“I would have liked to have known what happened. I knew that they said that they’d take him to xxx and they’d keep him in overnight and that he’d appear in court in the morning, then something would happen then. I would have liked to have known if he had been charged and if he was jailed, basically. If
he had been jailed I would have been quite satisfied but the police said to us, when I did call them up and asked for feedback, well it’s in the hands of the courts and it depends on what judge you get.”

However, there was a connection between prior expectations of services and actual opinions expressed by respondents. Respondents who had been repeat victims of crime had much lower expectations about the services that they should receive at this time as the following comment illustrates:

“I don’t really expect to hear anything unless the police get someone for the crime…its not their place to do that’.”

Similarly, another repeat victim commented that:

“Experience tells you that the police don’t have the resources to keep running back and forward to tell people ‘sorry but we don’t have any clues…or don’t worry we are still working on it’. That’s just not practical and would be a further waste of police time…I wonder what people would think if they couldn’t get a cop because he was out placating some poor blighter who had his window broken…they wouldn’t be pleased I can tell you that.”

OVERALL PERSPECTIVES

Respondents were asked about the number of police officers they had contact with throughout their case and whether they had any opinions about this. The number of contact officers was between two and four in most cases. Most of the respondents said that they had no opinions about this with comments like ‘I wasn’t fussed, it seemed reasonable enough’ or ‘I don’t have any views on this, it’s not something you give thought to’. However, other respondents had strong opinions about the number of police involved as the following illustrate:

“It would have been easier if only one person had been dealing with my case.”

“I’d have rather had one coming with no uniform on really. Yes, with no uniform, so that nobody sees he was coming. Folk always think, oh what’s the police doing at your house?”

“It just really added, I suppose, to the distress that we were already having because we had the three officers on the initial day and then the SOCO team was called out the following day. So that night we actually had to sleep on chairs on the couch because we couldn’t touch anything.”

“We could do with a lot less officers coming into your home.. they come with that tackity boots approach…too many officers too much noise from the radios…and have you ever heard the way that they knock your door….anyone would think that it was you that was the criminal. It made the whole thing more of a drama…my wife was so upset…I mean we were the victims after all….all this and my house was broken into.”
Professionalism of the police

When asked whether all the officers involved in the case acted in a professional manner, twenty-seven respondents said yes and only one said no. However, there was some dispute about levels of professionalism, perceptions of professionalism and also about how useful it was to have a ‘professional’ officer in their home at a time of crisis. Perceptions of professionalism were coloured, to some extent, by the individual’s prior expectations of the services that they would receive from the police. Repeat victims had lower expectations in terms of service provision.

Some positive comments included:

“Yes, they were both okay, straight forward enough and seemed plausible.”

“Yes. They were very professional.”

“Yes, as I’ve said they were both very professional.”

“Yes they all seemed helpful.”

“Oh yes, they were very nice. No, really nice. I can’t say nothing against them as far as that goes, they were really nice.”

“Yes, they were all really pleasant, especially when first we went up to the actual police station, they were really good. I couldn’t fault them, they were really helpful.”

Some negative comments included:

“Yes, they were very professional but not very friendly.”

“They were friendly but very official.”

“They were professional and courteous but they were not helpful.”

“Yes, a bit too professional…. All uniformed and shiny buttons …It all adds to the stress, why cant they just wear plain clothes …and turn those radios down a bit…it’s like an invasion from the S.S. I asked the officer to turn his radio down a few times but he couldn’t hear me because of the racket from his radio.”

“Yes, I suppose you could say that. I mean the SOCO officers came in, done their job and left again without saying basically two words to us other than that they couldn’t find anything.”

Overall satisfaction

Respondents were asked to comment on their overall satisfaction about how their case was handled by the police. Twenty-one respondents commented that they were satisfied with the
overall treatment they had received from the police. Three respondents commented that they were unsatisfied with the treatment they had received and five people were undecided. Of the five who were undecided the general consensus was that they were happy with the initial police response but were dissatisfied with the overall after care service. There was also a general acknowledgement that the police were doing the best job that they could under the circumstances.

“Yes, I was satisfied that the police are doing what they can under the circumstances.”

“Yes, he did all he could for me.”

“Aye, it was okay, as I said their hands are tied when it comes to young offenders or joy riders.”

“I wish they had got whoever had done the damage to my car, but I didn’t think that they would.”

“Yes I would say, they were very good as far as tending to us. They really did tend to us, coming up to see us and everything.”

“Well that’s a yes and a no I suppose. The initial part, yes I would say it was, it was quite good in how they handled it but the aftermath could have been handled slightly better.”

Respondents were asked to comment about whether they had felt that their case had been dealt with in an appropriate way. The majority of respondents [twenty-one] commented that they were satisfied that their individual case was dealt with in an appropriate manner whereas seven respondents were not satisfied. Although comments varied there was a common complaint about lack of follow up communication between victim and police.

“Yes, I have no complaints about how the case was handled; I would have liked to have been better informed about how the case was progressing.”

“No, I think that they could have done more and could have been more helpful.”

“I think so, yes. I would say so. As I say, I’ve never heard if it was ever closed or anything like that, I don’t know.”

“For the nature of the case, I suppose it was yes because a house break in really isn’t on the top of the priority list.”

“Yes, in a sense it was handled initially in a good sense it was yes but then again, you look at another side of the coin and you think, well no it wasn’t.”

“I don’t really know how they dealt with the case, so I would say no. Because if he had got back to me to tell me what they’d done that would be fine but they hadn’t done that.”
Perceptions of bad practice

Respondents were asked to comment on any ways that they thought the service received from the police could be improved. Again, the need for better communication between the police and victims of crime was mentioned by sixteen respondents. Some examples follow:

“Definitely communication, get back to me. I mean I don’t expect them to come and solve it because, obviously, this type of crime is very difficult unless you’ve got evidence but at least come back to me to let me know what you’ve done.”

“Yes, I mean the follow up could have been a follow up basically. As I said previously, even if it was just a call to say that they were no further on in the case, it would have been nice just as a courtesy call basically.”

“Communication was poor; I would have felt less vulnerable and safer if I was told what was happening.”

“It would have been better if I was told about the progress of the case...and I would have liked to know if the case was solved.”

Some other recurring complaints included the delay in getting back personal belongings after the case was closed, an issue which was mentioned five times. Victim blaming was mentioned three times. Insensitivity of individual police officers was mentioned twice. One respondent commented very strongly on what he had perceived as a further invasion of his privacy caused by the police’s approach to the situation, as the following quotation demonstrates:

“I think that the whole case could have been improved in some ways.... start with police attitudes. Too many officers...loud radios, they have no concern for the children in the house asleep. Oh they were very professional and all that but they didn’t take into account they could be adding to the stress and trauma...I think they could do with some training in sensitivity. Another thing is that they go off and leave you in the dark about what is happening, never a call. How would they like it to happen to them?”

Other general points raised included a perceived shortage of police on the streets; too many officers attending the scene of the crime and the need for a single named contact officer for continuity in feedback.

Perceptions of good practice

Respondents were asked the question ‘from your experience and involvement with the police as a victim of crime, could you identify examples of good practice in terms of the response or treatment that you received from the police?’ The majority of respondents simply reiterated points that they had mentioned earlier in the interview. Some recurring themes follow:

Friendly, sensitive and reassuring officers were mentioned nine times.
“The officers were concerned for our welfare, which made us feel more at ease. They were nice friendly men.”

“Yes, the way that the officers treated us was friendly and sensitive throughout the entire case.”

“Well, as I said, I thought they were very helpful, they really attended to us very quick, as I said, when we were broken into or stones through the window or garage, they were up very quick.”

“Yes, the personal approach ...they were very friendly and put me at ease.”

“Always their personal approach ...this is very good and reassuring.”

“As I said earlier, they have to work under big pressures all of the time, but they never made me feel like I was wasting their time, they were very helpful and sympathetic.”

Response time was good [or as expected] in the majority of cases, an issue which was mentioned seven times:

“I don’t know what you would call good practice, they got there very fast when I called them - I suppose that is good practice because they are very busy.”

“Yes, definitely, initial response and kept informed of what was happening that particular night.”

The majority of respondents commented that the police acted professionally. However, perceptions of professionalism were coloured, to some extent, by the individual’s prior expectations of the services that they would receive from the police.
CHAPTER SIX INTERVIEWS WITH CORPORATE VICTIMS

REPORTING THE INCIDENT

Reason for reporting the crime

There was a variety of reasons why corporate victims chose to report crimes to the police. Some reported that they did so as a matter of company policy:

“Well, basically, it was just the first, our policy just, we contact the police first.” (38 year-old male, commercial housebreaking victim).

Others were more concerned that a crime had been committed and that therefore attempts should be made to apprehend the offender:

“Well basically, just so that hopefully at the end of the day the person that’s committed the crime would be taken to task for it” (30 year-old male, victim of both types of crime).

“A crime had been committed, I wanted them caught.” (30 year-old female, victim of both types of crime).

However, since most of the respondents were representatives of relatively small concerns (in several cases they were the owners of the companies) it is likely that offences against their organisations would be viewed in a more personal and potentially more punitive light than by those working for larger concerns.

Only one respondent mentioned that they had any hopes of their property being returned;

“I suppose to catch the criminal, to get the stolen objects back.” (35 year-old male, both types of crime).

Other victims felt that apprehending offenders would help prevent further offending:

“I just thought it seemed to be the correct thing to do. I mean I knew a lot of the time if it’s a minor one it’s very difficult for them to find anybody, but I just thought in case there might have been another break-in in the night, they might have been able to get somebody, you know, just by chance.” (47 year-old male, both types of crime).

Method of reporting the incident

All of the corporate victims interviewed had chosen to report the incidents by telephone, with 10% using the Emergency 999 service, and 90% contacting their local police station. The single respondent who used the 999 service felt that by doing so he would receive a faster response form the police.

“I suppose the answer to that is, quick response.” (35 year-old male).
Those reporting to their local police station felt that it was inappropriate to use the 999 emergency service for crimes that they did not consider to be emergencies.

“It was telephone because it’s the most convenient way and local, just because I didn’t think it required 999.”

“Well it wasn’t an emergency ... it would have been a waste of a 999.”

It seemed the only way. I mean the crime was done by the time I, you know, it had happened so there was no emergency, there was no point in dialling 999. It was just a, they’d been and gone and the obvious thing was to phone the police.

One person (working in a shop) used the telephone because “... you can’t just leave the shop to go find a police officer”. In general the telephone was felt to be the quickest and most convenient method of reporting while being able to remain at the scene of the crime and thus maintain its integrity.

**Direct involvement in crime**

Some 40% of this cohort of victims reported that they had themselves been involved in the crime to some extent. Their experiences ranged from being woken in the middle of the night because they were key holders, to being witness to an assault against a member of staff, and discovering a credit card fraud at an hotel.

**Perceived threats to self and others**

When asked if they or any other member of staff were in any immediate perceived danger at the time of the crime, 20% of respondents reported that other members of staff had been physically assaulted during the incidents.

“A bloke assaulted a member of staff when I was there.”

“Yes, we’ve got two related crimes here that we’re talking about and the second time they came back and they beat the guy up in the 24 hour service station.”

Another respondent reported experiencing a feeling of danger due to the drunken state of the offender.

Apart from the threat of physical assault, the only other perceived threat was of financial loss to the company which was mentioned by one respondent. No other respondents had experienced or anticipated any threat to themselves or other members of staff. Amongst the corporate cohort 80% reported that they had made it clear to the police at the time of reporting the incident that no employees were at risk. One was unable to remember and another (an instance of forecourt car theft and damage which had occurred at night) maintained ‘There wasn’t really much need, that was pretty obvious’.
Response times

In the majority of cases respondents reported satisfaction with response times by the police to initial reports. However, one respondent reported that it had taken two telephone calls and four hours before the police attended the scene. In this particular instance the slow response by police had caused a small amount of disruption to the organisation that had sealed off the area of the break-in, which meant that it was practically the whole day before that area could be utilised. In 40% of cases amongst this cohort the response time was viewed as the main concern by victims. Other respondents had other priorities which included:

“How we were going to explain to the customer that their car had been stolen?”

Other respondents took a more pragmatic view of events

“Well I had other things that I could have been getting on with so it was inconvenient, but what do you expect, they are busy all the time up here.”

Response received from the police

The actual response in terms of officers attending and procedures observed appears to have been considered favourably by most respondents and to meet their expectations. Initial responses tended to comprise a visit from two uniformed officers with, where appropriate, additional attendance by CID officers and scene of crime officers.

Six of the cohort expressed their satisfaction with the police response to their reporting of the incident:

“I will give them their due, they did actually know about, that we had three cars stolen and they knew the whereabouts of two of them and that’s before I even reported it.”

“Very quick, instant, minutes”

and two claimed they were ‘very satisfied’. Two said they were not satisfied at all, with one of the latter group being very dissatisfied because the slow response time caused operational difficulties in carrying on working with an area cordoned off:

“After the initial report would have been, yes it would have been about four hours from the initial report.”

Another member of the latter group had experienced an earlier incident in which the response was initially less than satisfactory but their experience had later improved:

“There was one in particular, which we weren’t very happy with and the police .... with a little bit of pressure and persuasion from ourselves they actually came up trumps.”
Communication by attending officers regarding the progression of cases at the stage of initial attendance was reported by five of the cohort as being non-existent or at best vague. However five reported that they were kept well informed. All of those respondents who reported having been supplied with information as to how their case would be progressed were in the Inverness area. No respondents outside the Inverness area reported such information being supplied at the point of initial contact. One of the respondents who reported that he had been well informed as to the way that the enquiry would progress felt that he received preferential treatment due to his wife being a civilian employee of the police. Despite the seemingly negative experience of five of the cohort, only two of the total group felt that at the initial stage of the investigation it would have been helpful to have more information. Comments included:

“No, we don’t have time for that kind of conversation ... it’s a fact of life today.”

“No, we are talking about the middle of the night here, who needs to hear more of that stuff?”

With regard to the issue of victims receiving the help that they felt that they needed, five gave an unqualified ‘yes’. In addition, one respondent in the cohort reported that he felt that he received the necessary help in the initial phase immediately after the incident, but that the service provided subsequently failed when it came to following up with feedback on progress of the case.

From the whole cohort only one respondent reported that she was herself experiencing any problems in relation to the crime. Her problem manifested itself in an increased mistrust of people. It is interesting that this respondent was the only female in the cohort, in that it may be that women are more prepared to accept that such events are likely to be distressing than are men. One male reported that while he was himself not experiencing any problems resulting from the incident, a member of staff who was assaulted at the time had had to undergo a lifestyle change as a result.

Interestingly again, when discussing the costs both financially and psychologically of the incidents, while all respondents were quite prepared, sometimes at length, to describe the financial costs, only the female respondent was prepared to acknowledge any psychological costs. The financial costs varied from negligible to £20,000. The female respondent had lost approximately two stones as a result of the incident which she said was due to the anxiety she experienced, and continued to experience about possible repeat victimisation.

In terms of cost to the community, five of respondents felt that costs must be high as a result of offenders carrying out multiple offences as opposed to the relatively few offences they had experienced themselves. Other respondents felt that costs to the community were slight and did not view costs incurred in police time and resources as being either significant or ultimately paid for by the community.

The views expressed by seven respondents about the general level of service they received from the police were positive, with another respondent giving qualified approval. The 70% majority of respondents included those who felt that the public and police were let down by the justice system when suspects were apprehended and either returned to the community or prosecutions had failed to achieve convictions. As one respondent put it,
“... the police have caught the people, the police have got the evidence of the people and then, as far as I’m concerned, the justice system allows these people to run free for a long period of time to continue to do the same crime again ...”

Another respondent felt that the police are in a ‘no-win’ situation and described the outcome of an offence that he had experienced as follows:

“I had wheels stolen off a car, the culprit was actually caught and charged and the Procurator Fiscal took no action. So, I mean, that must be pretty soul destroying for the police as well, as well as me.”

One additional respondent felt that the police were not responding as quickly as they should and one respondent described the general level of service as “terrible”. The respondent who described the service as terrible felt particularly aggrieved after supplying information that identified the offender, which she believed the police had failed to act upon. Amongst those who gave positive reports on the general level of service many expressed the view that the police were doing all that could be expected of them with the limited resources available for the less serious forms of volume crime that this study focuses on.

PROGRESS OF THE CASE

Information and liaison

On the issue of the kind of evidence that the police would need to obtain and how they would achieve that, the majority (eight respondents) of the corporate cohort claimed that they had not been given any information of this type.

A topic that caused widespread disappointment for respondents was that of not being updated with the progress of their cases by the police. While in 80% of cases respondents had been informed verbally by investigating officers that they would be informed of progress, feedback was subsequently forthcoming in only 50% of cases.

In only one instance within this cohort did a respondent ask for further information from the police. Another respondent claimed that the police were

“... very vague with everything. They said that the crime was ongoing, didn’t really give me an answer.”

It was reported by seven respondents that they had been told of a named officer who would deal with their cases while three could not confirm this. Five respondents said that they had been content with this situation, while others felt that it was a pointless exercise since:

“... they’re not going to tell you anything anyway.”

and

“I wasn’t happy because he was never there.”
When respondents were asked if they had been informed about other sources of support available such Victim Support or crime prevention officers, five replied that they had been provided with leaflets about Victim Support and crime prevention but in only one instance had a crime prevention officer paid a visit. In addition one further respondent had been informed about Victim Support but had not taken the matter further. All of the respondents who had been given information about both Victim Support and crime prevention were located in the same police force area.

While eight respondents felt that additional information about other services would not have been helpful or were ambivalent about such information, two felt that it would have been of assistance. One respondent commented:

“Yes, I suppose it would have been now that I look back, but at the time I never really thought about it to be honest that much, but Victim Support is about three doors away from my shop and I didn’t even know it existed.”

In instances where victims had been given advice or information, only two respondents reported that they had made use of it:

“Just upgraded security.”

“Yes, I mean there was a couple of small things that was suggested that we did.”

As a result of the advice on security offered one respondent reported taking additional measures to safeguard their future security. Comments included:

“We’ve changed our security company, upgraded cameras, just generally tightened things up, put in more locks and stuff.”

However, when asked what measures they had taken as a result of the crime rather than as a result of any advice offered by the police, four respondents reported specific measures including the following:

“A fair bit, tightened up security, external doors and locks and stuff like that.”

“We’ve upgraded the locks on all the roller doors and all external doors we’ve secured.”

“I put in CCTV ... I put in an extra lock on the front door. I’ve changed all the locks on the back doors. Also, money wise, security is tight with us. I changed my bank as well because the bank I’m with now is just a few steps away from my shop.”

“Well, I put lights at the back where I didn’t have them before.”
All the corporate respondents were unanimous in their opinion that there was a joint responsibility between the police and the individual/company for the safety of their staff and property. One respondent was careful to point out however, that

“I would have said joint, mainly myself. I have to make sure the premises are secure and I can keep the staff as safe as possible... but I also think they have a role to play.”

Crimes that were/were not solved

As stated earlier, it is very difficult to extrapolate any significant quantitative data from these sections due the volume and variety of crimes that have been committed against the corporate victims and the small numbers involved. Therefore, crimes that were solved and those which were not have been analysed together in order to gain a better understanding of the situation.

When asked to comment about any information received from the police regarding other criminal justice agencies, the majority of respondents stated that they had not been offered this type of information. However, when asked if this information would have been useful to them the majority stated that this information was not important to them. Comments included:

“I don’t think so, to be honest, I can’t really think of a reason why they needed to.”

“No, most people know that stuff anyway.”

Outcome of the case/s

Again, there was a great deal of mixed information supplied by respondents who found it difficult to comment on specific cases. However, many respondents made general comments about the outcome of a few cases of which they had direct experience. Examples of the comments follow:

“There was a conviction in the majority, yes. The two incidents of TVs being stolen, we never did get anyone for that but certainly in the incidents of the credit card fraud, the vandalism and the fighting, the fighting one there was people prosecuted.”

“I seem to remember there was a couple solved but, well they knew who did it and one was charged and it was thrown out.”

“So no, I don’t think there was any actual conviction. There was one that a guy did about twenty places in the one night, so he did get put down but it wasn’t specifically for mine but I was part of it. There was one conviction.”

“One was, well there was three arrested. One was released without charge. The other one plea bargained his way out of it, he got two hundred hours community service, banned from driving for two years and a year’s probation...”
“….. Actually, in any case that I’ve ever been involved with, the first time you actually hear that somebody has been charged is when you get their defence lawyers writing to you wanting to take a statement. You never ever hear anything from the police.”

“In the case of the break-in they got the people involved and they went to court, we didn’t hear what happened after that.”

Similarly, when respondents were asked if they were informed about the outcome of the case, the information supplied during the interviews was difficult to interpret. However, in the majority of cases respondents commented that they had never been officially informed about the outcome of the case. An example of a typical response follows:

“Well one of them is actually relatively recent. The other one is quite old and in all honesty I can’t really answer that truthfully because I don’t really remember. There could well have been something that’s come in, it could well be ongoing, I don’t know.”

However, when asked if it would be useful to be given this follow-up information from the police, the majority of respondents felt that it would be a worthless endeavour, often acknowledging that such an exercise would put a further drain on limited police resources.

“I couldn’t have cared really. I mean when it’s just minor things, you know ... and you know if somebody pinches a car radio, the chances of them getting anybody are pretty remote. So I just like to forget about, you just accept that it’s an ongoing cost and hope the cost keeps down, you don’t want to get too many.”

OVERALL SATISFACTION

Respondent were asked to comment about how satisfied they had been about the outcome of the cases. There was a very mixed response to this question with the majority of respondents commenting that they were generally unsatisfied at the outcome of the case, however their criticisms were aimed at the perceived leniency of criminal justice system, and not directly at the police. Some examples follow:

“It was okay, but as I say they, they get sentenced to six months and they will be back out in two, to do it all again.”

“Not at all satisfied but in my eyes, these people that have committed the same offence twice, I am sure, unless they’re in for something else, they’re still able to come and penetrate my premises regardless of what I do.”

“Not very, because when the police managed to catch somebody and charge them and then the Procurator Fiscal decides that it wasn’t worth carrying on, that’s not very satisfactory but I mean, that’s not the police’s fault, that’s the system.”
“Well, personally speaking, the outcome of the ones that they actually got, no I didn’t think that was appropriate to let somebody off because you’re more or less saying that, and that was the Fiscal I would have a problem with, because he’s more or less saying, well you’re giving somebody the opportunity to do it again.”

“To me that was totally unacceptable. I mean even if it was a case of, OK we can’t clog up the courts with it, there should be some sort of system where he gets a set fine or something, you know, he shouldn’t get off with it or a yellow card and if you get two yellow cards you go to jail, something like that, I don’t know. There should be some sort of system.”

Professionalism of the police

Respondents were asked to comment about their experiences of dealing with the police in terms of the professionalism employed when dealing with a case. Ten respondents commented that the police had always acted professionally and only one stated that they did not. Respondents where then asked if they were satisfied with the overall treatment that they had received from the police. Eight respondents stated that they were happy and three stated that they were not happy with the overall treatment. Of the three who commented that they were unhappy, only one respondent complained about the actual treatment he had received from an individual police officer. The other two respondents made comments about the lack of follow-up communication, as the following quotations demonstrate:

“No outcome... Yes, any contact I had with them here I was shut aside with, they seemed to be very professional when they were here but it was just them getting here.”

“I would have to say no. The initial yes but in general, no. My personal perception again comes into this that says, I reported it, that’s it.”

When asked if they felt that the cases were handled in an appropriate way the great majority of respondents (nine) commented that the cases had been dealt with in an appropriate way.

Perceptions of bad practice

Respondents were asked to comment on any ways in which the service that they had received from the police could be improved. The comments offered in this section mirrored the comments that emerged from the corporate focus group discussion. One respondent commented on perceived bad practice from an individual police officer in terms of the treatment that he had received. This respondent claimed that the officer in question acted in a condescending manner towards him: the officer told the respondent to ‘calm down’. However, it must be stated that this was an isolated incident, which involved an individual’s personal perception, and does not reflect on the general comments of the delivery of police services as perceived by the other respondents. This does, though, mirror some of the comments raised by the individual respondents about the perceived lack of sensitivity from some officers in relation to the delivery of services. This respondent commented that:
“I think that they’ve obviously been taught how to deal with a victim of crime and I think to calm me down, telling me to calm down is not the answer.”

In general, parallels can be drawn with the corporate focus groups, inasmuch as the majority of respondents made criticisms that were directed at specific aspects of the criminal justice system and not directly at the police. Many respondents expressed sympathy for the police whom they perceived to be doing the best job possible with very limited resources, while the criminal justice system was perceived as taking a very lenient stance against criminals in general. Some comments follow:

“But the police do their job and then the Procurator Fiscal lets them off with it with a slap on the wrist…what’s the point there then?”

“Yes, by justice. I have to say that when people have been charged for something, I think the length of time that it takes to basically, go through the systems if you like, is far too long, which in my occasion causes people to re-offend.”

“From the police’s point of view, I can’t see it, no. I can’t really see it, you know, what they can do. Their hands are tied really aren’t they?”

“Yes, the Fiscal could have not done his plea bargaining bit.”

Similarly, it was also highlighted that in certain circumstances many crimes against businesses go unreported because of lack of resources. This was especially relevant to respondents working in the retail industry, and again comparisons can be drawn from the information received from the corporate focus group discussion. Some examples follow:

“Maybe if there were more police on the streets it would act as a better deterrent...you know prevention is better than cure.”

“More police about...that would maybe be a deterrent to crime.”

“We can't hold everyone whom we suspect might be shoplifting...I mean that’s a violation of their rights...we would end up in the dock...so we have to let it go unreported.”

Perceptions of good practice

Respondents were asked to identify any examples of good practice from their experience as a victim of crime and their involvement with the police. Again, as with the corporate focus groups, there was a general agreement that the police offer the best services possible under the circumstances. Similarly, good practice was measured in terms of resources available and the perceived associated limitations. Many respondents commented extensively about how the criminal justice system lets the police down to some degree as the following quotations illustrate:
“Well, they work under extreme pressure all the time and get very little credit for it, people are always quick to point the finger at them if something goes wrong but they rarely get any credit.... I couldn’t do their job.”

“Yes, the police do their job and it’s pointless in most cases... the police send them (perpetrators) away with a warning but they just come back another day...what can you do? The system needs a good shake up. I would like to add that every time the police are called no matter how trivial the matter, they respond...it must be a pain for them to be running back and forwards chasing away people. Then the courts give the ones involved a lump of sugar and a pat on the head ...you know the ‘that’s a good boy, don’t do it again’ routine. It has to be soul destroying for the police, they do all the work and the courts just let them walk. Where is the justice in that?”

Other respondents made comments about specific aspects of the service raising issues like the response time with statements like, “I would just say the promptness of everything”. The same respondent commented that:

“There’s been other incidences where our alarm has been triggered falsely through the night and the majority of times, I would say seven out of ten times, the police...they’re on site at the property....they haven’t even been phoned, they’ve just been driving past.”

Another respondent commented that what he had perceived as good practice was the fact that the police always respond regardless of the crime.

“Well, I suppose even though it was a relatively minor crime, they still bothered to take fingerprints and do things like that, you know, they had their scenes of crime guys down and all that.”

Another respondent who was very frustrated about what he perceived as very limited results in relation to the outcome of crimes that had been committed against him commented that:

“I don’t know if it was all bad. I do remember they were very polite, well there was one that was very polite. As far as the crime itself goes, I can’t really say anything positive about them.”

Finally, respondents were asked if they would like to add any further comments. Five of the respondents stated that they were happy that they had covered all of the issues that they wished to discuss. The others reiterated some of the points that they had made throughout the interview. However, a few respondents made additional comments about how the criminal justice system should be improved. Some comments follow:

“A general comment would be that there is more crime out there other than speeding offences, parking offences etc. And I think the government resource should be put into fighting serious crime.”
“Well I do, I think the country would be a better place if the police resources were put into fighting crime, real crime as I call it, rather than looking at revenue streams but that’s just the way we have to be, we need to live. We’re just robbing Peter to pay Paul.”

“Nothing about the way the police handled it but, as I say, more against the Fiscal I’m a bit, basically, pissed off with. I mean, there was three cars and a motorbike stolen.”

“... basically, the guy got a slap on the wrist. I mean, it beggars believe that the Fiscal can actually let somebody away with that because that’s what’s happened. And the day that he got out of jail, he comes down to our place and scratches three cars.”
CHAPTER SEVEN  DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important to remember that this study specifically relates to the experiences of victims of volume crime and thus, by definition, most of the crimes concerned were relatively minor and routine. This would clearly have coloured the police response, including the degree of priority given to reports of such crimes. Nevertheless, the Inspectorate’s decision to commission this research reflects the importance that is placed upon the response of Scottish police services to such relatively everyday crimes and their victims.

Overall, victims interviewed for this study expressed satisfaction with the service they had received from the police. Where they had complaints, they often indicated that they had nevertheless received the best possible response given the perceived limitations upon the police in terms of resources. Many respondents expressed frustration about the wider criminal justice system, and blamed agencies other than the police for the problems they experienced.

As one might expect, response times differed according to the nature of the reported offence. Respondents in this study generally understood why this was the case, and accepted that property crimes were less serious and less deserving of a rapid response than offences where people were put in danger. In those few cases where people had felt endangered, they were generally satisfied with the response time to their report. Housebreaking victims had higher expectations (in terms of response time and more generally) and tended to express higher levels of satisfaction than victims of vehicle related crimes. There was no evidence, in this study, that victims abused the emergency '999' service, and many expressed indignation about its inappropriate use in cases of property or minor crime.

Advice given by the police to victims appeared to be seen differently by corporate and individual victims. At times, crime prevention advice of the kind which corporate victims welcomed (and tended to act upon) was not so well received by the individual victims. Individual victims were more likely to perceive such advice as insensitively delivered and as blaming them for their victimisation. This would seem to have implications both for initial and continuing training of police officers: many victims, while praising officers’ general professionalism and the service given, felt that this aspect of the service could be improved. Greater sensitivity seems to be required in responding to personal as opposed to corporate victims, even in the case of relatively minor property and vehicle related offences. For example, it matters a good deal how a police officer tells a housebreaking victim that their property is statistically likely to be targeted again in the near future. For this information to be useful, it is important that it be linked to further advice about how to prevent revictimisation: otherwise, it can seem uncaring or insensitive to the individual victim. Individual victims are also more likely to be dealing with the police in that role for the first time, so that they are likely to know less about the system and how it works than are some corporate victims, many of whom are staff of large companies who deal with crimes almost routinely. This, too, has implications for how the individual victim is treated by police officers. Staff training needs to include information about the likely reactions and needs of victims of crime, emphasising the potential for dramatic effects, even in minor cases, when the victim is predisposed to respond badly to becoming a victim. Housebreaking victims were more likely to be given information about other sources of support (such as from Victim Support) than were vehicle related crime victims.

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Although the numbers involved are small, it also appears from this study that there are gender differences in the ways in which crime prevention information is provided. Women respondents generally felt that they had been given little information about the criminal justice process and what would happen to their case in the future, whereas men were given such information more routinely. Some male respondents described receiving clear but quite detailed information about forensic tests and the workings of other criminal justice agencies. A few women respondents who had been victims of housebreaking also commented that they found the way in which they were told that their property was likely to be targeted again was insensitive.

The more general issue of information provision figured largely in this study, not surprisingly given its prominence in previous research on victims and the police. Victims complained that they were told by investigating officers that they would be kept informed, but that in reality it was very difficult to find out about the progress of the cases they were involved in. It was also difficult to get property back when it had been taken for forensic purposes. The idea of a named contact officer was welcomed in principle, but many victims said that they found it difficult to contact the person concerned. There was also a perception (particularly on the part of corporate victims) that the criminal justice system was insufficiently ‘joined-up’. This was perceived to waste police officers’ time by failing to deal with some offenders for what were seen as extraneous reasons, for example cases being dropped by the Procurator Fiscal.

In a sense, it might almost be better if police officers stopped telling victims that they would be kept informed. What would be better still, however, would be the establishment of a way of ensuring that such offers were routinely honoured in practice. The new Victim Information and Advice Service may offer a solution to this problem in the more serious cases, but few of these fall into the category of volume crime and none of the respondents in this study mentioned having any contact with its staff. It is clear both from the literature and from the comments of many of the respondents in this study, that victims welcome knowing what happened to offenders in court, and when and why ‘their’ cases are closed. Priority should perhaps be given to ensuring that at the very least, this information is routinely communicated to victims in order to provide them with an opportunity for closure. Of the respondents in this study, older people tended to be less proactive in pursuing the named contact officer: it was the younger victims who tried to make use of this service and expressed frustration at the difficulty of getting hold of the officer concerned. Corporate victims were also relatively unlikely to seek such information.

Victims’ expectations of the police were generally not particularly high. The victims interviewed had low expectations insofar as the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of perpetrators were concerned, and they generally did not expect to recover stolen property. To some extent, people appeared to have come to accept crime as something with which one has to live. It may be that increased public awareness of crime statistics has led people to develop a greater understanding of the reality of low clear-up rates, particularly in the case of volume crimes. There is thus a degree of stoicism on the part of victims, and a routine approach to volume crime by the police which accepts the reality that only a relatively small proportion of cases will be cleared up successfully. This seemed to be reflected in the ways in which victims were treated by officers. In some cases, victims reported that they found this ‘routine’ approach uncaring or unhelpful. Higher levels of satisfaction with the service provided by the police were observed in rural areas. Generally lower levels of satisfaction were observed in the urban areas, where there were also larger numbers of repeat victims.
The general presentation of police officers was important to victims: they frequently commented upon the level of friendliness, courtesy, attentiveness, reassurance and the amount of time officers spent on interviewing them. In a number of cases, approval of officers' professionalism was linked by respondents to their perceived high levels of training. 'Well trained' officers were perceived as more professional.

As in a number of other research studies, satisfaction levels with the police were generally high on first contacting them, but tailed off over time. This is undoubtedly, at least in part, due to the issue of the police service failing to provide information on the progress of cases, as discussed earlier. It also related, in a few cases, to victims' perceptions that they had been blamed for becoming victims. Clearly, the issue of victim-blaming needs to figure largely in police training. Victims tended to remember and resent off-the-cuff comments which they perceived as critical of their failure to secure their property appropriately or to anticipate the possibility of offences being committed against them. In a small number of cases, police failure to show that they understood the level of loss - emotional or financial - sustained by victims was also resented. The theft of a bicycle can, as one respondent pointed out, be just as inconvenient as the theft of a BMW, but the police response does not always reflect this perception on the part of victims.

**Recommendations**

The issue of crime prevention advice would appear to need reviewing. The study found evidence of gender differences in the ways in which victims were treated, and although there may be good reasons for this, it appears that men are routinely given more information about what is likely to happen next than women are. Corporate victims also tended to respond more favourably to receiving such advice than individual victims did: for the corporate victim, the issues are less personal. The police officers who respond to crime reports need to give information in consistent ways which victims find supportive. This is in part a training issue, but it also needs to be kept under review as part of dealing with individual cases sensitively. The provision of an information leaflet for victims might alleviate some of the difficulties described, but the main issue is one of victim awareness and sensitivity.

Although some respondents spoke highly of the training they believed police officers to have received, their descriptions of the ways in which reports were dealt with sometimes suggested that officers had poor understanding of the likely effects of volume crimes upon their victims. Domestic housebreaking victims were routinely referred to Victim Support, but only a very small minority took up this suggestion, even where they were apparently quite severely affected by the crime. In part, this may be because officers had little knowledge about the working of Victim Support and the actual services it could offer. The service received by victims from the police would be improved if officers' training equipped them better to understand how victims experience their treatment by the criminal justice system.

The issue of information provision to victims also needs to be reviewed. Police officers need to understand that if they give an undertaking to keep a victim informed about the progress of the case, this is perceived as a personal commitment rather than expressing a general hope that this is how the system will treat the victim. Police officers' training needs to reflect this reality. The named officer system, although supported in principle by respondents, does not appear to be working well. Individual officers who work on a shift system and have to give priority to urgent matters, are not proving sufficiently accessible to members of the public.
wanting to find out how cases are progressing - and these police officers are not necessarily in the best position to provide such information anyway. Better ways of providing this information need to be found, perhaps building upon the experience of the Victim Information and Advice service in more serious cases.


Interview schedule for individual Victims

Interview number……… Date of interview………

Interviewer………

Introduction:

A. Introduce self

B. Describe project.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (HMIC) has commissioned De Montfort University and the University of Stirling to conduct independent research into the service provided by police forces to victims of such crimes as housebreaking and motor vehicle theft. The research aims to develop an understanding of the victim’s experiences and views of working with the police in order to identify elements of good practice as well as any areas where there may be gaps in the services that could be improved, and assess the levels of service currently provided in response to victims’ needs

C. The option to terminate this interview:

You can choose to stop the interview at any point, or you can pass on any questions that you are not comfortable about answering.

D. Anonymity:

Your responses will be added together with those from other respondents and used to write the report that will be submitted to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (HMIC), who have commissioned the research. It will not be possible to identify individuals from the information given in the report.
Section 1: Personal details

[RECORD RESPONDENT’S SEX]

1…male
2…female

[READ OUT]: I would like to take down a few personal details: Can I ask you first of all was the crime ever solved?
  1. Yes [we will return to this point later]
  2. No [we will return to this point later]

[READ OUT]: Could you tell me please if you were a victim of:
  1. Vehicle related crime?
  2. Domestic housebreaking?
  3. Both?
[CIRCLE AS APPROPRIATE]

[READ OUT] and can I ask you was this the only crime against you that has required police involvement?
  1. Yes [PLEASE COMMENT]
  2. No [PLEASE COMMENT]

[WRITE IN]

[WE WILL RETURN TO THIS POINT THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW]

1. Could you tell me your age please?

[WRITE IN]
2. Can you tell me which of the groups on this card you consider yourself to belong to?

[SHOW CARD A AND/OR READ OUT AS APPROPRIATE]

1…Black – Caribbean
2…Black – African
3…Black – Other
4…Indian
5…Pakistani
6…Bangladeshi
7…Chinese
8…White
9…Any other ethnic group [WRITE IN]……………………

3. In what geographical area were you when the crime was committed against you?

[WRITE IN]

4. Do you know what police force that area falls under?

[WRITE IN]
Section 2: Reporting the incident (All participants):

[IF REPEAT VICTIMS CHECK VIEWS ABOUT SERVICES RECEIVED AFTER ALL CRIMES]

[READ OUT] Now I would like to ask you about your experience of using the police services.

5. Why did you make the decision to report the crime to the police?

   [WRITE IN]

6. How did you report the incident to the police?
   7. By telephone? [SEE 6(a)]
   8. In person at the police station?
   9. By email?
   10. Other? [PLEASE COMMENT]

   [WRITE IN]

6. (a) Did you call your local police station or did you call 999 emergency services?

   [WRITE IN]

6 (b) Did you know the number of the police station or did you have to get it by other means?

7. Why did you choose to report the crime in this way?

   [WRITE IN]

7 (a) What kind of information would you liked to have received at this point?

7(b) Did you get the information that you had expected and/or wanted at this point?

   [WRITE IN]
8. Were you directly involved in the incident? 
[WRITE IN]

9. In your opinion, were you or anyone else in any immediate perceived danger? 
[WRITE IN]

10. In your opinion, what was the biggest threat that you or anyone else concerned at the time of the incident? 
[WRITE IN]

11. Did you make this fact clear to the police when you reported the incident? 
[WRITE IN]

12. How quickly did the police respond to the initial report of the crime? 
[WRITE IN]
13. Was the speed of their response your main concern, or did you have other priorities?

[WRITE IN]

14. What was the police’s response?

[WRITE IN]

14 (a) Was this the response that you had expected at this point of the investigation?

14 (b) If not why not?

15. In your initial contact with the police, was it explained to you how and when the police would progress the enquiry?

[WRITE IN]

16. What other, if any, explanations were given?

[WRITE IN]

17. In your opinion, would it have been helpful to have anything else explained to you at this point?

[WRITE IN]
18. Overall, how satisfied were you with the police response to your reporting of the incident?

1… Very satisfied [PROBE FOR SPECIFIC COMMENTS]

2… Satisfied [PROBE FOR SPECIFIC COMMENTS]

3… Not satisfied at all [PROBE FOR SPECIFIC COMMENTS]

[PLEASE COMMENT]
[WRITE IN]

19. Did you get/are you getting all the help that you needed?

[PLEASE COMMENT]
[WRITE IN]

20. Did you experience/are you experiencing any problems in relation to the crime?
[IF REPEAT VICTIMS CHECK VIEWS ABOUT SERVICES RECEIVED AFTER ALL CRIMES]
[WRITE IN]

21. How would you estimate the costs of the crime to yourself/family?
[PROBE FOR FINANCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL COSTS]
[WRITE IN]
22. In your opinion, how would you estimate the costs of the crime on the local community and to society as a whole?
   [PROBE FOR FINANCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL COSTS]
   [WRITE IN]

23. What are your general views about the service that you received from the police?

   [IF REPEAT VICTIMS CHECK VIEWS ABOUT SERVICES RECEIVED AFTER ALL CRIMES]
   [WRITE IN]
Section 3: Progress of the case (All participants)

[IF REPEAT VICTIMS CHECK VIEWS ABOUT SERVICES RECEIVED AFTER ALL CRIMES]

[READ OUT] Now I would like to ask you about the progress of the case.
24. Were you told what kind of evidence the police would need and how they would go about getting it?

[PLEASE COMMENT]
[WRITE IN]

25. Were you told whether you would be kept in touch with progress?

[PLEASE COMMENT]
[WRITE IN]

1...Yes [GO TO 25 (a)
2...No [GO TO 25 (b)

25 (a) How did the police say that the follow – up would be achieved?

25 (b) Did you expect to be kept in touch about the progress of the case at this point?

26. Did the police keep you in touch with information about the progress of the case?

[PROBE FOR HOW THIS WAS DONE]
[WRITE IN]
27. If you asked the police for further information about the progress of your case how was your request responded to? [WRITE IN]

28.(a). Did you have a named officer who would deal with your case throughout?
   1. Yes [GO TO 28(b)]
   2. No [GO TO 28(c)]

28(b) How happy were you with this arrangement? [WRITE IN]

28(c) How happy were you with this arrangement? [WRITE IN]
29 (a) Were you told about other sources of support available to you as a victim of crime (Victim Support etc.)?

1. Yes [PLEASE COMMENT]  
2. No [GO TO 29(b)]  

[WRITE IN]

29(b). Would it have been useful to have been told about other services available to victims of crime?

[WRITE IN]

30. Were you told about crime prevention or safety/security procedures etc.)? 
   1. Yes [GO TO 31]  
   2. No [GO TO 30a]

30. (a) Do you think it would have been useful to have been given this type of information/advice? [GO TO Q33]
31. How did you use this information/advice?
   [GO TO Q 32.]
   [WRITE IN]

32. What changes, if any, have you made to your security systems/procedures as a result of this information/advice?
   [WRITE IN]

33. What changes, if any, have you made to your security systems/procedures as a result of the crime?
   [WRITE IN]

34. In your opinion, who do you feel is responsible for the safety of your property? Is it?
   1. Solely yours/your Company’s responsibility.
   2. The police are responsible as public servants.
   3. Joint responsibility of yourself/company and the police as public servants.
   4. Other, please specify………………………………….
Section 4: Crimes that were solved.

[IF THE CRIME WAS SOLVED ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS IN THIS SECTION, IF THE CRIME WAS NOT SOLVED GO STRAIGHT TO SECTION 5: q 40]

[IF REPEAT VICTIMS CHECK VIEWS ABOUT SERVICES RECEIVED AFTER ALL CRIMES]

[READ OUT] Now I would like to ask you some general questions about the crime please.

35 Did the police explain the roles of other criminal justice agencies to you?

1. Yes [PLEASE COMMENT]
2. No [GO TO 35a]

[WRITE IN]

35. (a). Would this kind of information have been useful to you?

[WRITE IN]

36. In your opinion, do you feel that the police made sure that you understood the roles of other criminal justice agencies?

[WRITE IN]
37. What was the outcome of your case?

[WRITE IN]

38(a) Were you informed about the outcome of the case?

1. Yes [GO TO 38 (b)]
2. No [GO TO 38(c)]

38(b) Who informed you about the outcome?

[WRITE IN]

38(c) Who do you think should have informed you about the outcome?

[WRITE IN]

39. How satisfied were you with the outcome?

[WRITE IN]
Section 4: Crimes that were not solved.

[IF REPEAT VICTIMS CHECK VIEWS ABOUT SERVICES RECEIVED AFTER ALL CRIMES]

[READ OUT] Now I would like to ask you some general questions about the crime please.

40. Were you officially informed that your case had been closed?

1. Yes [PLEASE COMMENT] [GO TO 41]
2. No [GO TO 40a]

40 a. Would it have been helpful to have been told that the case was closed?
[WRITE IN]

41. Was the reason for the case being closed explained to you?
[WRITE IN]

42. How satisfied were you with the explanation provided?
[WRITE IN]
43. Did you accept the outcome as appropriate and reasonable?

[WRITE IN]

44. What, if any, further information would you have welcomed at this stage?

[WRITE IN]
Section 5: Overall perspective. [All participants].

[IF REPEAT VICTIMS CHECK VIEWS ABOUT SERVICES RECEIVED AFTER ALL CRIMES]

[READ OUT] Now I would like to ask you about your overall perspective please.

45. How many different officers did you have to deal with throughout the case?
   [WRITE IN]

46. What were your views about this?
   [WRITE IN]

47. Did all the officers involved in the case deal with you in a professional, courteous and helpful manner?
   1. Yes [PLEASE COMMENT]
   2. No [PLEASE COMMENT]
   [WRITE IN]

48. Did you express satisfaction/dissatisfaction with any aspect of the police response in your case?
   1. Yes [GO TO 48a]
   2. No [PLEASE COMMENT]
   [WRITE IN]
48 a. How was that responded to?

[WRITE IN]

49. Overall, were you satisfied with the police handling of the case?

[WRITE IN]

50. In your opinion was your case handled in an appropriate and reasonable way?

[WRITE IN]

[IF REPEAT VICTIMS CHECK VIEWS ABOUT SERVICES RECEIVED AFTER ALL CRIMES]

51. Are there any ways you think this could be improved?

[WRITE IN]
52. From your experience and involvement with the police as a victim of crime, could you identify examples of good practice in terms of the response or treatment that you received from the police?

53. Finally, is there anything else you would like to add about the way that the police handled your case, or any general comments that you would like to add?

[READ OUT: THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION]
RESEARCH ON THE INTERFACE BETWEEN THE SCOTTISH POLICE SERVICE AND THE PUBLIC AS VICTIMS OF CRIME

Schedule for Corporate Victims

Interview number........... Date of interview...........

Interviewer............

Introduction:

A. Introduce self

B. Describe project.

Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (HMIC) has commissioned De Montfort University and the University of Stirling to conduct independent research into the service provided by police forces to victims. We are particularly interested in the experiences of victims of crimes that have been committed against the individual, such as housebreaking and motor vehicle theft. We are also interested in the experiences of victims of corporate crime, such as fraud, robbery, vandalism, shoplifting etc.

The research aims to develop an understanding of the victim’s experiences and views of working with the police in order to identify elements of good practice as well as any areas where there may be gaps in the services that could be improved and assess the levels of service currently provided in response to victims’ needs.

C. The option to terminate this interview:

You can choose to stop the interview at any point, or you can pass on any questions that you are not comfortable about answering.

D. Anonymity:

Your responses will be added together with those from other respondents and used to write the report that will be submitted to Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (HMIC), who have commissioned the research. It will not be possible to identify individuals from the information given in the report.
Section 1: Personal details

General Section:

[READ OUT]: I would like to take down a few general details: Can I ask you first of all was the crime ever solved?
   1. Yes [we will return to this point later]
   2. No [we will return to this point later]

[READ OUT]: Could you tell me please if you were a victim of:
   1. Vehicle related crime?
   2. Commercial housebreaking?
   3. Crimes committed against your business or place of work?
   4. Other [PLEASE COMMENT]
[CIRCLE AS APPROPRIATE]

[READ OUT] and can I ask you was this the only crime against you/your company that has required police involvement?
   1. Yes [PLEASE COMMENT]
   2. No [PLEASE COMMENT]

[WRITE IN]

[WE WILL RETURN TO THIS POINT THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW]

Section 1 A: Personal details.

[RECORD RESPONDENT’S SEX]

   1…male
   2…female

1. Could you tell me your age please?

[WRITE IN]
2. Can you tell me which of the groups on this card you consider yourself to belong to?

[SHOW CARD A AND/OR READ OUT AS APPROPRIATE]

1…Black – Caribbean
2…Black – African
3…Black – Other
4…Indian
5…Pakistani
6…Bangladeshi
7…Chinese
8…White
9…Any other ethnic group [WRITE IN].....................

3. In what geographical area were you when the crime was committed against you/your company?

[WRITE IN]

4. Do you know what police force that area falls under?

[WRITE IN]

Section 1B: Business/ Organisation details.

[READ OUT] I would like to ask you some questions about your business/organisation?

5. Can you tell me the name of your business or organisation?

[WRITE IN]

6. Can I ask you what is your position within the business/organisation?

[WRITE IN]
7. How long have you held that position?

[WRITE IN]

8. What are your role and responsibilities within the company/organisation?

[PROBE FOR INFORMATION ABOUT RESPONSIBILITY FOR STAFF SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION] [WRITE IN]
Section 2: Reporting the incident (All participants):

[IF REPEAT VICTIMS CHECK VIEWS ABOUT SERVICES RECEIVED AFTER ALL CRIMES]

[READ OUT] Now I would like to ask you about your experience of using the police services.

9. Why did you make the decision to report the crime to the police?
   [WRITE IN]

10. How did you report the incident to the police?
    11. By telephone? [SEE 10(a)]
    12. In person at the police station?
    13. By email?
    14. Shop fitted panic button?
    15. Other? [PLEASE COMMENT]
       [WRITE IN]

10 (a) Did you call your local police station or did you call 999 emergency services?
    [WRITE IN]

11. Why did you choose to report the crime in this way?
    [WRITE IN]

12. Were you directly involved in the incident?
    [WRITE IN]
13. In your opinion, were you or any other member of staff in any immediate perceived danger?

[WRITE IN]

14. In your opinion, what was the biggest threat that you or any other member of staff faced at the time of the incident?

[WRITE IN]

15. Did you make this fact clear to the police when you reported the incident?

[WRITE IN]

16. How quickly did the police respond to the initial report of the crime?

[WRITE IN]
17. Was the speed of their response your main concern, or did you have other priorities?

[WRITE IN]

18. What was the police’s response?

[WRITE IN]

19. In your initial contact with the police, was it explained to you how and when the police would progress the enquiry?

[WRITE IN]

20. What other, if any, explanations were you given?

[WRITE IN]
21. In your opinion, would it have been helpful to have anything else explained to you at this point?

[WRITE IN]

22. Overall, how satisfied were you with the police response to your reporting of the incident?

1…Very satisfied [PROBE FOR SPECIFIC COMMENTS]
2…Satisfied  [PROBE FOR SPECIFIC COMMENTS]
3…Not satisfied at all [PROBE FOR SPECIFIC COMMENTS]

[WRITE IN]

23. Did you get/are you getting all the help that you needed?

[PLEASE COMMENT]
[WRITE IN]
24. Did you experience/are you experiencing any problems in relation to the crime?
   [PLEASE COMMENT]
   [WRITE IN]

25. How would you estimate the costs of the crime to yourself/company/organisation?
   [PROBE FOR FINANCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL COSTS]
   [WRITE IN]

26. In your opinion, how would you estimate the costs of the crime on the local community and to society as a whole?
   [PROBE FOR FINANCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL COSTS]
   [WRITE IN]

27. What are your general views about the service that you received from the police?
   [PLEASE COMMENT]
   [WRITE IN]
28. Were you told what kind of evidence the police would need and how they would go about getting it?

[PLEASE COMMENT]
[WRITE IN]

29. Were you told whether you would be kept in touch with progress?

[PLEASE COMMENT]
[WRITE IN]

30. Did the police keep you in touch with information about the progress of the case/cases?

[PROBE FOR HOW THIS WAS DONE]
[WRITE IN]
31. If you asked the police for further information about the progress of your case, how was your request responded to? [WRITE IN]

32. (a). Did you have a named officer who would deal with your case throughout?
   a. Yes [GO TO 32(b)]
   b. No [GO TO 32(c)]

32(b) How happy were you with this arrangement? [WRITE IN]

32(c) How happy were you with this arrangement? [WRITE IN]
33 (a) Were you told about other sources of support available to you / your company as a victim of crime (crime prevention, safety/security procedures etc.)?

1. Yes [GO TO 33 (c)]
2. No [GO TO 33(b)]

[WRITE IN]

33(b). Would it have been useful to have been told about other services available to victims of crime? [GO TO Q 35]

[WRITE IN]

33.( c ). How did you use this information/advice?

[WRITE IN]

34. What changes, if any, have you made to your security systems/procedures as a result of this information/advice? [GO TO 36]

[WRITE IN]
35. What changes, if any, have you made to your security systems/procedures as a result of the crime?

[WRITE IN]

36. In your opinion, who do you feel is responsible for the safety of your staff and property? Is it?

1. Solely yours/your Company's responsibility.
2. The police are responsible as public servants.
3. Joint responsibility of yourself/company and the police as public servants.
4. Other, please specify………………………………

[WRITE IN]
Section 4: Crimes that were solved.

[IF THE CRIME WAS SOLVED ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS IN THIS SECTION, IF THE CRIME WAS NOT SOLVED GO STRAIGHT TO SECTION 5: q 41]

[IF REPEAT VICTIMS CHECK VIEWS ABOUT SERVICES RECEIVED AFTER ALL CRIMES]

[READ OUT] Now I would like to ask you some general questions about the crime / crimes please.

37. Did the police explain the role of other criminal justice agencies to you?

1. Yes [PLEASE COMMENT]
2. No [GO TO 37(a)]
   [WRITE IN]

37(a). Would this kind of information have been useful to you?

   [WRITE IN]

38. In your opinion, do you feel that the police made sure that you understood the role other criminal justice agencies?

   [WRITE IN]

39.(a) What was the outcome of your case?

   [WRITE IN]
39(b) Were you informed about the outcome of the case?

1. Yes [GO TO 39 (c)]
2. No [GO TO 39(d)]

39(c) Who informed you about the outcome?

[WRITE IN]

39(d) Who do you think should have informed you about the outcome?

[WRITE IN]

40. How satisfied were you with the outcome?

[WRITE IN] [GO TO SECTION 6: q 46]
Section 5: Crimes that were not solved.

[IF REPEAT VICTIMS CHECK VIEWS ABOUT SERVICES RECEIVED AFTER ALL CRIMES]

[READ OUT] Now I would like to ask you some general questions about the crime please.

41. Were you officially informed that your case had been closed?
   1. Yes [PLEASE COMMENT] [GO TO 42]
   2. No [GO TO 41(a)]

[WRITE IN]

41(a). Would it have been helpful to have been told that the case was closed?
   [WRITE IN]

42. Was the reason for the case being closed explained to you?
   [WRITE IN]
43. How satisfied were you with the explanation provided?

[WRITE IN]

44. Did you accept the outcome as appropriate and reasonable?

[WRITE IN]

45. What, if any, further information would you have welcomed at this stage?

[WRITE IN]
Section 6: Overall perspective. [All participants].

[IF REPEAT VICTIMS CHECK VIEWS ABOUT SERVICES RECEIVED AFTER ALL CRIMES]

[READ OUT] Now I would like to ask you about your overall perspective please.

46. How many different officers did you have to deal with throughout the case?
   [WRITE IN]

47. What were your views about this?
   [WRITE IN]

48. Did all the officers involved in the case deal with you in a professional, courteous and helpful manner?
   1. Yes [PLEASE COMMENT]
   2. No [PLEASE COMMENT]

   [WRITE IN]
49. Did you express satisfaction/dissatisfaction with any aspect of the police response in your case?

1. Yes [GO TO 49(a)]
2. No [PLEASE COMMENT]

[WRITE IN]

49(a). How was that responded to?

[WRITE IN]

50. Overall, were you satisfied with the police handling of the case?

[WRITE IN]

51. In your opinion was your case handled in an appropriate and reasonable way?

[WRITE IN]
52. Are there any ways you think this could be improved?

[WRITE IN]

53. From your experience and involvement with the police as a victim of crime, could you identify examples of good practice in terms of the response or treatment that you received from the police?

54. Finally, is there anything else you would like to add about the way that the police handled your case, or any general comments that you would like to add?

[READ OUT: THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION]