

Governance structures for burglary prevention and response

Bringing together strategies for burglary prevention and positive outcomes through governance structures.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Prevention
Topic	Theft and burglary Neighbourhood crime Intelligence
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Region	North West
Partners	Police
Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	April 2023
Scale of initiative	Local

Key details

Target group	Communities Offenders Victims
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Aim

The main aim of this initiative is to drive force performance around burglary. Additional aims include:

- improving the quality of burglary investigations
- educating officers and staff on what is required to provide a quality response to a burglary

Intended outcome

- Improved outcomes for victims and communities. These include:
 - a disruption of prolific burglary offenders
 - a reduction in burglary offences
 - an increase in charges for burglary and residential burglary offences
 - an increase in satisfaction with the quality and timeliness of service from the police
 - an improvement in trust and confidence in the police
- Increased understanding from officers and staff around:
 - the impact of burglary on victims
 - the importance of the 'Golden Hour' (the period after a burglary where arrest and forensic opportunities are greater)
 - the reporting of burglary offences
 - how best to respond to reports of burglary

Description

Merseyside Police has established a proactive governance structure to drive force performance around burglary. The approach seeks to prevent burglary, improve public confidence around the

police response and increase positive outcome rates for this crime type. The governance structure provides continued focus and encourages the sharing of burglary information and intelligence, promoting good practice across the force.

Operations

Burglary operations sit within the governance structure. These operations are:

- Operation Castle – a dedicated force burglary team who works through identified modus operandi and trends. The team are proactive in providing education to colleagues on topics such as burglary processes and victim impact. The aim of the team is to reduce and detect burglaries, provide reassurance to local communities, and upskill officers and staff to provide a quality response to victims of crime. The team also lead on prison visits and look for taken into consideration (TIC) opportunities from serious acquisitive crime (SAC) offenders. TICs are offences that a suspect has not been prosecuted for but which they admit under Operation Cleanslate.
- Operation Cleanslate – the operation has re-launched in Merseyside through Operation Castle. This involves informing suspects about the advantages of admitting further offences when they come into police custody. If suspects admit further offences at this stage, they will no longer be liable for future arrest and prosecution if new evidence emerges.
- Operation Assure – this operation was set up to specifically focus on burglaries in Liverpool, a densely populated policing area and home to many students. The operation started in recognition of the fact that Liverpool had approximately 48% of all force residential burglaries. This dedicated team of investigators work with the local policing team, response officers, force intelligence and prevention strands to provide a coordinated response to burglary in the area.

Operation Assure, Operation Castle and Operation Cleanslate work together to achieve the wider aim of driving force performance around burglary. The teams do this through attending internal meetings with colleagues involved in the other operations and through developing relationships with colleagues from the North-West Regional Organised Crime Unit (NWROCU) and neighbouring forces. These relationships have proved key in developing the force's ability to share information, intelligence, and best practice for burglary offences.

Governance meetings

Oversight of the burglary operations comes from a robust structure of regular governance meetings. These meetings aim to set the strategic direction for burglary prevention, disrupt ongoing burglary threats and identify areas for improvement in the force response to burglary. These meetings provide a framework for the burglary operations to operate within. These meetings provide a framework for the burglary operations to operate within. The meetings include:

- Daily investigation strand meetings: This daily meeting is run by a detective superintendent and is attended by detective chief inspectors (DCIs) across the investigation strand in Merseyside. The meeting covers all crimes of note across the force in the last 24 hours and includes burglary and performance.
- Command team corridor meetings: This daily morning meeting follows on from the strand meeting and focuses on specific policing areas. The meeting is attended by DCIs and provides a forum to discuss current burglaries. Representatives involved in burglary prevention and detection from local policing, response and intelligence attend the meeting.
- Governance meetings: This monthly tactical meeting drives activity around areas such as named suspects, forensics, intelligence, integrated offender management, recent serious acquisitive crime releases and prevention work. This meeting is run by a detective superintendent. It is attended by lead responsible officers for burglary (at chief and detective chief inspector ranks), and representatives from different strands of the force who contribute towards burglary prevention and detection. Responsibility and accountability are key to area performance.
- Area performance meetings: This monthly meeting is chaired by the local policing superintendent. It is held to discuss performance against all crime types within the force, but always includes a section on burglary.
- Coordination meetings: These meetings are held in the event of emerging burglary threats. The meetings provide quick time response and coordination. They also provide the opportunity to proactively analyse the specific threat and identify ways to disrupt by ensuring appropriate measures, resources and trigger plans are in place.
- Crime scrutiny panels: An internal scrutiny panel is led by a detective superintendent. The panel 'dip samples' burglary crimes from initial response through to investigation – highlighting use of Golden Hour principles, victim contact and supervisory oversight. Good practice and

areas for improvement are identified through this meeting. Officers and staff are given feedback on their performance with the aim of continuous improvement.

To ensure that items agreed at the various meetings result in action, the force have a live Microsoft Teams site set up around the structure of a 4P plan (prepare, prevent, pursue and protect). The site requires the teams and operations involved in burglary to record their activity around how their work has progressed against the principles of the plan. This process ensures teams maintain responsibility and accountability for driving performance forward. Minutes from meetings and circulations are directly put on to the 4P plan, enabling a record to be kept of strategic level decisions through to local action.

Overall impact

Merseyside Police has seen the following improvements under their governance structures:

- an increase in the number of burglary charges
- a reduction in the number of burglary crimes recorded
- an increase in the number of 'taken into considerations' (TICs)
- more officers showing an interest in being recruited into detective roles

Between 1 January and 30 September 2024:

- Burglary positive outcome performance increased by 11.25 % (compared to an increase of 6.30% in the same period in 2023 and 6.49% in the same period in 2022).
- There was a reduction of 30.63 % in burglary crimes recorded (compared to a reduction of 11.13% in the same period in 2023 and 14.28% in the same period in 2022).

Learning

Progress in Merseyside Police has been assisted by driving small changes over time. The force recognises that continuous improvement doesn't occur overnight, with buy-in and education across teams needing time to take effect.

The force has found using a 4P plan helps with recording activity around burglary. It means you can see good practice or areas for development at a glance. This is especially the case given the

regular updates and live status of the 4P plan.

The force has found constant review, reclassification, feedback and learning to be key to making improvements to burglary prevention and response. As part of Operation Castle's remit, the team run training sessions for officers and staff around all aspects of burglary investigations – going 'back to basics' with topics including writing statements effectively and the importance of Golden Hour actions.

The use of force systems is also encouraged and supports the successful burglary strategy in Merseyside. These systems include:

- Delphi – for the management of named offenders, oversight of performance and the mapping of offences
- Digital images database (DID) – for burglary image circulations
- Using CORVUS software for daily briefings to teams
- A burglary occurrence enquiry log (OEL) template has been introduced on NICHE (the force crime system). This is to be used for all burglary dwelling reports. The template works as a reminder to officers to follow Golden Hour principles when taking initial reports

As part of Operation Assure, a 'burglary car' is used. The force has found that having this designated car for burglaries has helped provide quick-time responses and has improved the quality of service provided to victims.

Priority and volume crime investigation (PIP 1) officers have had the opportunity to work with Operation Castle for a 6-month period to upskill and develop, working alongside experienced detectives. This has proved successful in developing colleagues, building networks, and encouraging officers to follow a career in investigations. Those on attachment have wanted to stay, wishing to complete the national investigators exam (NIE) and work towards becoming a detective. As a result of this success, the attachment system has been promoted to other teams who face low detective numbers.

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