

## **Crime Screening**

Crime Screening has been operating effectively within South Yorkshire Police for many years. Its objective is to 'screen' out of the investigative process those crimes where the enquiries made at the time of reporting (personally or by telephone) indicate that no fruitful lines of further enquiry are apparent. Priority can then be given to investigation of those crimes where there exists a positive potential for detection.

The decision whether or not to 'screen' a crime, will be made by the Crime Management sergeant.

The effectiveness of the Crime Screening system relies on the professionalism of officers and other staff taking the initial reports of crime, either personally or by telephone. Only if the preliminary investigation is conducted thoroughly and the crime report completed comprehensively can the Crime Management Sergeant make an informed decision concerning screening.

It is difficult to specify the types or categories of crime considered suitable for screening. The system calls for a subjective judgement to be made, each case being considered on its individual merits. The existence or non-existence of Solvability Factors provide the main criteria, but certain categories of crime, by their nature, will always merit further investigation irrespective of Solvability Factors.

These will include, by definition, Serious Crimes committed against the person, such as :-

- Murder;
- Manslaughter;
- Infanticide;
- Rape;
- Blackmail & Assaults where serious injury has been inflicted.

Similarly, serious offences against persons and property, such as arson, will not be considered for screening.

Other categories of crime will exempt themselves from the screening process because of their inherent detection potential, and will include cases of :-

- Indecency;
- Fraud;
- Handling Stolen Goods;
- Theft by Employees, and the Series-Type of offence which, despite its possibly non-serious nature, merits further investigation by virtue of its frequency and the increased possibilities of detection.

The following list of categories of crime is given as a guide to the type of offence which may be considered for screening, provided that the criteria specified in this policy are fulfilled :-

- Burglary (Other Premises)
- Theft from the Person
- Theft in Dwelling
- Theft from Unattended Motor Vehicle
- Theft of Pedal Cycle
- Other Thefts
- TWLA
- Criminal Damage
- Others - as specified by the Crime Management Sergeant

**NB.** It must be emphasised that the above listed categories of crime provide only a guide to the type of offence which may be considered for screening. Each individual case must be assessed upon its own merits.

No attempt must ever be made to screen out a crime, whatever its nature, wherever it appears that there are further useful lines of enquiry to pursue.

Furthermore, no crime should be screened out if it is aggravated by any of the following features:

- Racially motivated
- Other 'hate crime' e.g. homophobic
- Vulnerable victim

Specific consideration should also be given by the Crime Management sergeant to the issue of repeat victimisation. The decision should take into account whether the offences involved are the same (i.e. both burglary or is one damage to m/v committed in a city centre?) and the period of time that has elapsed since the previous offence. In general, there should be a presumption not to screen in cases of repeat victimisation, where the victim is an individual member of the public.

Contact will be made with victims when crimes are screened either by personal contact or letter.