

“ PPP ”

People for Proper Policing in North Wales

Carry on Screening?

Courtesy of **JOHNNO HILLS** at **REAL POLICING** Monday, 12 November 2007

In yesterday's **Sunday Telegraph**, I was invited to write an analysis on the practice of '**screening out**' of criminal offences. Screening out concerns the telephone resolution of offences where it can be established at the time of the initial report whether or not there are any potential lines of inquiry. In the absence of cctv, witnesses or forensic evidence, forces have taken to screening out offences such as burglary and theft without attending the scene or visiting the victim. Perhaps the practice of screening out was inevitable. Yet, is it desirable and what circumstances make it necessary? I suppose it depends on who you ask. At the risk of incurring the wrath of my former colleagues, it is a subject which surely requires particular attention considering its implications for victim care, community contact and the widely held public belief that police have become remote from them.

Screening out of incidents is nothing new. As much as Sergeants relentlessly pursue detections by proxy they also shield officers from a great deal in terms of spurious complaints from the public and incidents which do not constitute a criminal offence. Screening out of non-crime incidents is easier to justify than the screening out of those incidents where a crime has actually taken place. The former is far better suited to telephone resolution whereas the latter is not. The last thing a victim of crime wants to be told is that a police officer will not be attending and that they'll have to be content with a crime report number. If I may be so bold as to infer, based on the majority of the victims of crime that I ever spoke with, many just want the opportunity to explain to a police officer what has happened to them and are far more concerned with having the personal contact and reassurance of knowing the police are there, listening to them and that they care than whether or not the offence against them is likely to be detected.

I recall quite distinctly, a study carried out by **Sussex Police** who contacted **5,000 victims of crime** to gauge their level of satisfaction with officers' performances and were asked what was their greatest expectation of the police. Top of the list was a swift officer response. Next was the expectation that officers would do what they say they are going to. Detections were not even mentioned.

For the full Telegraph article and comments go to the **links** below ...

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/11/11/npolice211.xml>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/11/11/npolice111.xml>

Posted by Johnno at 18:46 <http://johnnoblog.blog.com/2292198/>

The PPP comments ... **as usual Johnno has a clear view of the real situation for the Police Officer at the frontline. WE ALL NEED this perspective to devise policies and suggest changes.**

As always our answer is PREVENTION is better than SCREENING, DETECTION, DISTORTED TARGETS and cooking the books.