SCHOOLWATCH SCHEME

SUBMISSION FOR THE
1999 HERMAN GOLDSTEIN AWARD
BY LYNN BEESTON
HARTLEPOOL COMMUNITY SAFETY DEPARTMENT, CLEVELAND POLICE, ENGLAND.

HARTLEPOOL
BOROUGH COUNCIL

CLEVELAND POLICE

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

<u>Introduction</u>

Schoolwatch is a scheme established through a multi-agency approach and developed along similar lines to Hartlepool Neighbourhood Watch. It is based on the principle of local communities keeping a watchful eye on their local school with a view to reducing crime in and around school premises. The scheme targeted a total of 33 primary and special needs schools in Hartlepool.

<u>Scanning</u>

Initial scanning revealed that school premises were subject to crimes such as damage, burglary and arson. There was a perception from operational officers and the local Education Authority that the levels of crime were significant.

It was identified that problems existed across a range of schools. However, primary schools were selected for the scheme in an effort to involve pupils at an early age.

The main crime categories were burglary and criminal damage-

<u>Analysis</u>

Crime information was analysed and the number of crimes and cost to the community was established.

During 1997 in Hartlepool Police District there were 120 incidents of crime in primary schools at a cost of £25,958.

As a result the objectives of the Schoolwatch Scheme were established as:

1.   To reduce the incidents of crime within targeted schools.

2.   To encourage a sense of pride and ownership of each school by the pupils, staff, governors and residents of the surrounding area.

3.   The long term education of pupils with regard to crime prevention, community safety, good citizenship and the benefits of being a member of Neighbourhood Watch.

It was further identified that the problem was much greater at weekends and during school holidays when premises were unattended.

Response

A multi-agency working group was set up with a view to introducing the scheme throughout the town.   Support was gained from school governors, parents and Neighbourhood Watch members.

The main focus of the initiative was the schoolchildren themselves and presentations were carried out at each school.

Leaflets were distributed to residents and parents explaining how they could contribute to the scheme.

Funding was secured from industry - Nuclear Electrics contributed £1,000 for metal signs and Comcast Teesside donated £3,000 towards leaflets which were distributed with a membership card,, pen and pencil, all bearing the Schoolwatch logo, to each of the 10,000 pupils.

The scheme takes the unusual step of asking children aged between four and eleven years to assist by being the "eyes and ears" of the Police and help them in crime reduction and prevention. This generates a feeling of importance among the children and teaches good citizenship and the importance of the Neighbourhood Watch network.

Each school has been asked to submit an idea for a community safety initiative in and around their school to reduce crime further.

Each school will be awarded £200 to implement their project.

Assessment

Assessment focuses on crime levels before and after the implementation of the scheme.

In 1997 primary schools in Hartlepool reported 120 incidents of crime at a cost of almost £26,000.

During 1998 this was reduced to 70 incidents at the same schools at a cost of £9,227.

This represents reductions of 50 (41%) in the number of incidents and £16,731 (64%) in the cost suffered as a result.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Cleveland Police is the smallest Force in the UK, covering an area of 59,670 hectares in North East England. Within the Force area there are four Police Districts whose boundaries are coterminous with the four local Municipal Authorities.

The Force employs 1500 officers, with support from 600 civilian staff.

Hartlepooi is the most northerly town in the Force area, situated on the North East coast, lying on the northern banks of the River Tees estuary. The town has a population of 90,000. The last 20 years have seen a decline in traditional heavy industries such as coalmining, shipbuilding, iron and steel, contributing to an unemployment rate of 11.3%. Added to this Cleveland, and Hartlepooi in particular, is at the top of almost every poverty league table within the country.

Due to the success of Neighbourhood Watch in Hartlepooi, the Community Safety Team within Hartlepooi Police decided that a scheme similar to Neighbourhood Watch could be beneficial in relation to schools. A multi-agency working group was established in order to progress the initiative, which would be based on the pupils of each school and the community keeping a watchful eye on their local school and reporting to the Police anything of a suspicious nature. It was agreed that the scheme would target all primary and special needs schools, a total of 33.

SCANNING

Through local knowledge and liaison with the local Education Authority, concern was expressed at the level of crime in and around school premises. The types of crime ranged from minor criminal damage through to burglary and arson. (Appendix 1)

Feedback from operational officers supported the view of the Education Authority in that a significant number of calls to the Police were being made in respect of school premises.

Although problems existed across both comprehensive and primary schools, the aim of the Schoolwatch Scheme focused on primary schools.

Primary schools were selected as they tended to be smaller sites surrounded by houses and therefore attracted local youths into the grounds.

Comprehensive schools are located on much larger sites and have greater access to security services.

Furthermore, the involvement of pupils was to be an integral part of the scheme and it was felt that younger pupils would be more receptive to involvement.

This problem was selected due to the fact that Hartlepool Police receive a great deal of support from the town's Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators who wanted to become more involved in the life of their local school.

Initial diagnosis was limited to identifying burglary and criminal damage as being the main problems in and around school premises

ANALYSIS

The main source of information came from the District Crimes Desk. A breakdown of the levels of crime for each individual school was obtained, together with the cost of those incidents to the local community.

Number and cost of crimes in Primary Schools during 1997

Name of School	No. of Incidents	Cost of Incidents
St. Teresa's	6	£960
Rossmere	9	£835
Fens	Nil	Nil
Grange	Nil	Nil
Owton Manor	7	£1386
Rift House	15	£2365
Catcote	1	£100
Etdon Grove	Nil	Nil
Ward Jackson	3	£75
Kingsley	2	£800
Lynnfield	10	£787
St. Aidan's	1	£160
St. Cuthberts	1	£30
St. Josephs	2	£220
Stranton	7	£1110
Barnard Grove	2	£550
Clavering	Nil	Nil
St. Begas	2	£380
St. Helens	3	£165
St. John Vianney	5	£1020
West View	16	£4630
Brougham	13	£3660
Elwick	Nil	Nil
Greatham	Nil	Nil
Hart	Nil	Nil
Jesmond Road	4	£440
Sacred Heart	1	£160
Throston	Nil	Nil
West Park	Nil	Nil
Springwell	1	£100
Thornhill	1	£2300
Golden Flatts	7	£3525
Seaton Carew	1	£200

During 1997 in Hartlepool Police District there were 120 incidents of crime in primary schools at a cost of £25,958. As an example, West View School suffered 16 incidents of crime during 1997 at a cost of £4,630.

The scheme developed by involving the Police, Local Authority and Neighbourhood Watch, with the motive being to make schools more secure, reduce costs to the Local Authority and reduce the amount of Police time spent in dealing with such incidents. The objectives of the scheme were:

1. To reduce the incidence of crime within the targeted schools.

2. To encourage a sense of pride and ownership of each school by the pupils, staff, governors and residents of the surrounding area.

3. The long term education of pupils with regard to crime prevention, community safety, good citizenship and the benefits of being a member of Neighbourhood Watch.

The effect of these problems was that the money to repair damage, etc. came from the schools' budget, which resulted in less equipment and books being bought for the use of the schoois. It was also very upsetting for the children when their school was broken into to find computers stolen, work damaged and equipment vandalised.

Furthermore, there was a detrimental effect on the community in having school windows boarded up. This type of situation reflected badly on the area and its local community.

Before Schoolwatch was introduced there was a reactive response from Police that did not address the problem but merely "papered over the cracks" There was little crime prevention input or success at identifying suspects/criminals.

Analysis revealed that the problem was much greater at weekends and during school holidays when the premises were unattended. (Appendix 2) It was identified that the two main crime categories were damage and burglary resulting in loss of equipment and erosion of the quality of the schools' environment.

The vibrant Neighbourhood Watch in Hartlepool were involved in discussions about the problem. Support was canvassed and obtained from these groups in an effort to reduce crime at school premises.

RESPONSE

The Schoolwatch Scheme is a partnership between Hartlepool Police, Hartlepool Education Department and Neighbourhood Watch, who were all represented on the working group.

The first meeting of this working group was held in May 1997 with a view to introducing a scheme to combat crime in and around schools throughout the town. A letter was sent to the headteacher and governing body of each school, requesting their support. Whilst all partners were enthusiastic about the scheme, no funds had been identified to actually initiate it. It was recognised therefore that seeking funding for the scheme would be of paramount importance.

Regular meetings were held and it was originally planned to implement the scheme during the latter part of 1997. It soon became evident however that this target was unrealistic due to the amount of preparation and planning that was required. A new implementation date was set for January 1998, the intention being that the scheme would be introduced to schools on an individual basis, with a rolling programme to take place throughout the year.

It was decided that the schoolchildren themselves would be the main focus of the initiative and that a presentation would be given in each of the schools in order to engage their interest and encourage their participation. The group also felt that every pupil should be given some memento of the scheme which would remind them of it after the initial launch.

Leaflets were required in order to inform both the residents in the area surrounding the school and the parents of the pupils about how their vigilance could contribute to the success of the scheme. Metal signs were also required, to be displayed on the perimeter of each school site in order to act as a deterrent. A sign was designed by a primary school pupil which was similar in colour and style to the Neighbourhood Watch sign which was already in existence.

Local businesses were approached with regard to funding of the scheme and after much effort Nuclear Electric agreed to fund the production of 100 metal signs, approximately three for each participating school, at a cost of around £1000.

Comcast Teesside, a cable television company new to the area, were keen to fund the leaflets and other promotional materials to a cost of £3000. Explanatory leaflets were designed and produced together with scheme membership cards, pens and pencils, all bearing the Schoolwatch logo.

Prior to the scheme being officially launched, several presentations were given to governing bodies in the schools which had been identified as a priority, mainly due to the particularly high level of crime. Informal liaison with the headteachers of these schools also took place in order to ensure that the scheme would be well received and supported as fully as possible. A presentation was also given to the 1997 Annual Neighbourhood Watch Conference in Hartlepool in order to gain the support of Neighbourhood Watch groups throughout the town.

With the ground work completed and funding secured, the Schoolwatch Scheme was officially launched in January 1998 at West View Primary School, in the hope that at the end of the year the level of crime in schools would be substantially reduced.

The Police District Commander for Hartlepool introduced the scheme, with Judie McCort, a local radio and television presenter, making a guest appearance. Representatives of each of the other thirty two schools were invited to attend, along with the Mayor of Hartlepool.

The pupils were then given a presentation, informing them about the scheme and asking for their help. The children were asked how they had felt in the past when their school had suffered crimes such as broken windows and stolen computers etc. They had also been asked to suggest ways in which they could help, such as keeping a watchful eye on the school during holidays and reporting to an adult if they saw any strangers on the school site. At the conclusion of the presentation every pupil was issued with a membership card, which reminded them what to look out for, a pen and pencil bearing the . Schoolwatch logo and an explanatory leaflet to take home to their parents.

Throughout 1998 the scheme was launched in each of the remaining thirty two primary and special schools in Hartlepool, with each one receiving an interactive presentation by the Police and representatives of Neighbourhood Watch. Every one of the 10,000 pupils received a membership card, pen and pencil.

Every school now has at least three metal Schoolwatch signs displayed around the school site, which it is hoped will act as a deterrent to would-be intruders. Prior to each launch, members of Neighbourhood Watch delivered explanatory leaflets to every house in the vicinity of the school site, in order to make them aware of the scheme and gain their support.

The scheme received much media attention when it was first launched through local radio and newspapers. The Schoolwatch partnership ensured that this continued throughout the year in order to remind the public that its effectiveness relied upon them keeping a watchful eye on their local school and reporting anything of a suspicious nature.

Many of the schools engaged in follow-up work with the children. As an example, Golden Flatts Primary School pupils wrote a rap song about how they looked after their school following the launch of Schoolwatch. The headteacher wrote the music for the song and with the assistance of a local community recording studio, the partnership arranged for the song to be professionally recorded.

One of the main features of the scheme is that it takes the unusual step of asking children aged between four and eleven years to actually assist the Police in crime reduction and prevention. This generates a feeling of importance among the children and begins the long term education process of teaching the youngsters a sense of community safety, good citizenship and the importance of the Neighbourhood Watch network. The initiative also engages the local community and encourages them to take ownership of their local school and accept some responsibility for problems in their neighbourhood.

To complement the scheme, an initiative was conducted by Safe-In-Teesside, a county-wide regeneration scheme, to property mark all computers within schools with "Selectamark[1]. The local Education Authority also made funds available to address security improvements recommended by the Crime Prevention Officer in particularly vulnerable schools.

It was recognised from the outset that once the scheme had been established it would be important to maintain the impetus. Indeed, it was always intended that this initiative would be long term, with schools being re-visited in future years.

With this in mind, the Schoolwatch partnership organised a fund raising social evening in the summer of 1998. Local businesses donated raffle prizes and a total of over £500 was raised.

Further funding has been secured from Safe-In-Teesside, a partnership between the public and private sector, through the 'Security in Schools' project in order to continue with the scheme during 1999.

Each school in the scheme has been asked to-submit an idea for a community safety initiative either in or around their school, with the aim being to further reduce the incidence of crime. Each school will be provided with the names of a local member of the Neighbourhood Watch and the Crime Prevention Panel who will be available to offer help and advice.

Every participating school will be awarded up to £200 to implement their project. It is planned that a celebration event will take place in the summer of 1999, whereby representatives from each school will be invited to attend and provide a display focusing on their project.

ASSESSMENT

Evaluation has been from analysis of crime levels both before the implementation of the scheme and after. During 1997 primary schools in Hartlepool suffered a total of 120 incidents of reported crime, to a total cost of almost £26,000. Throughout 1998 there was a total of 70 incidents of crime in the same schools at a cost of £9,227. (Appendices 3 and 4) This represents reductions of 41% in the number of incidents and 64% in the cost suffered as a result.

	Incidents		Cost	
Name of School	1997	1998	1997	1998
St. Teresa's	6	4	£960	£160
Rossmere	9	6	£835	£540
Fens	Nil	1	Nil	£240
Grange	Nil	1	Nil	£50
Owton Manor	7	6	£1386	£1021
Rift House	15	4	£2365	£250
Catcote	1	1	£100	£140
Eldon Grove	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Ward Jackson	3	4	£75	£545
Kingsley	2	1	£800	£210
Uynnfield	10	9	£787	£412
St. Aidan's	1	3	£160	£250
St. Cuthberts	1	1	£30	£30
St. Josephs	2	Nil	£220	Nil
Stranton	7	2	£1110	£800
Barnard Grove	2	Nil	£550	Nil
Clavering	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
St. Begas	2	1	£380	£60
St. Helens	3	3	£165	£700
St. John Vianney	5	4	£1020	£250
West View	16	4	£4630	£2120
Brougham	13	6	£3660	£640
Elwick	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Greatham	Nil	2	Nil	£465
Hart	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
JesmondRoad	4	1	£440	£100
Sacred Heart	1	2	£160	£50
Throston	Nil	1	Nil	Nil
West Park	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Springwell	1	Nil	£100	Nil
Thornhill	1	Nil	£2300	Nil
Golden Flatts	7	2	£3525	£184
SeatonCarew	1	1	£200	£10
Total:	120	70	£25,958	£9,227

As an example, West View Primary School suffered 16 reported incidents of crime during 1997 at a cost of £4,630, compared to only 4 incidents in 1998 at a cost of £2.120. Another school, Rift House Primary, suffered 15 incidents in 1997 at a cost of £2,365, compared to only 4 incidents in 1998 at a cost of £250.

Cleveland Police costs its activity. The cost in Police time for dealing with incidents is as follows:

Criminal damage	£102 per crime
Burglary	£99 per crime
Theft	£93 per crime

This cost is purely based on the actual reporting of the crime and does not take into account any investigation which would follow.

Based on this information, the savings to Hartlepool Police District during 1998 in comparison to 1997 in relation to the crimes committed against primary and special schools was:

Burglary	£2,970
Criminal Damage	£2,856

The cost of dealing with incidents of theft increased by £837, giving a total saving of £5,826.

As a result of the scheme there is a much closer relationship between Neighbourhood Watch and local schools, with many Neighbourhood Watch groups holding their meetings on school premises.

AGENCY AND OFFICER INFORMATION

This problem solving initiative was adopted at ground level by the Community Safety Team consisting of a Sergeant, 2 Constables and a civilian Support member of staff.

All officers involved had received training in the principles of Problem Oriented Policing.

There were no extra incentives given to the officers in order to gain their commitment.
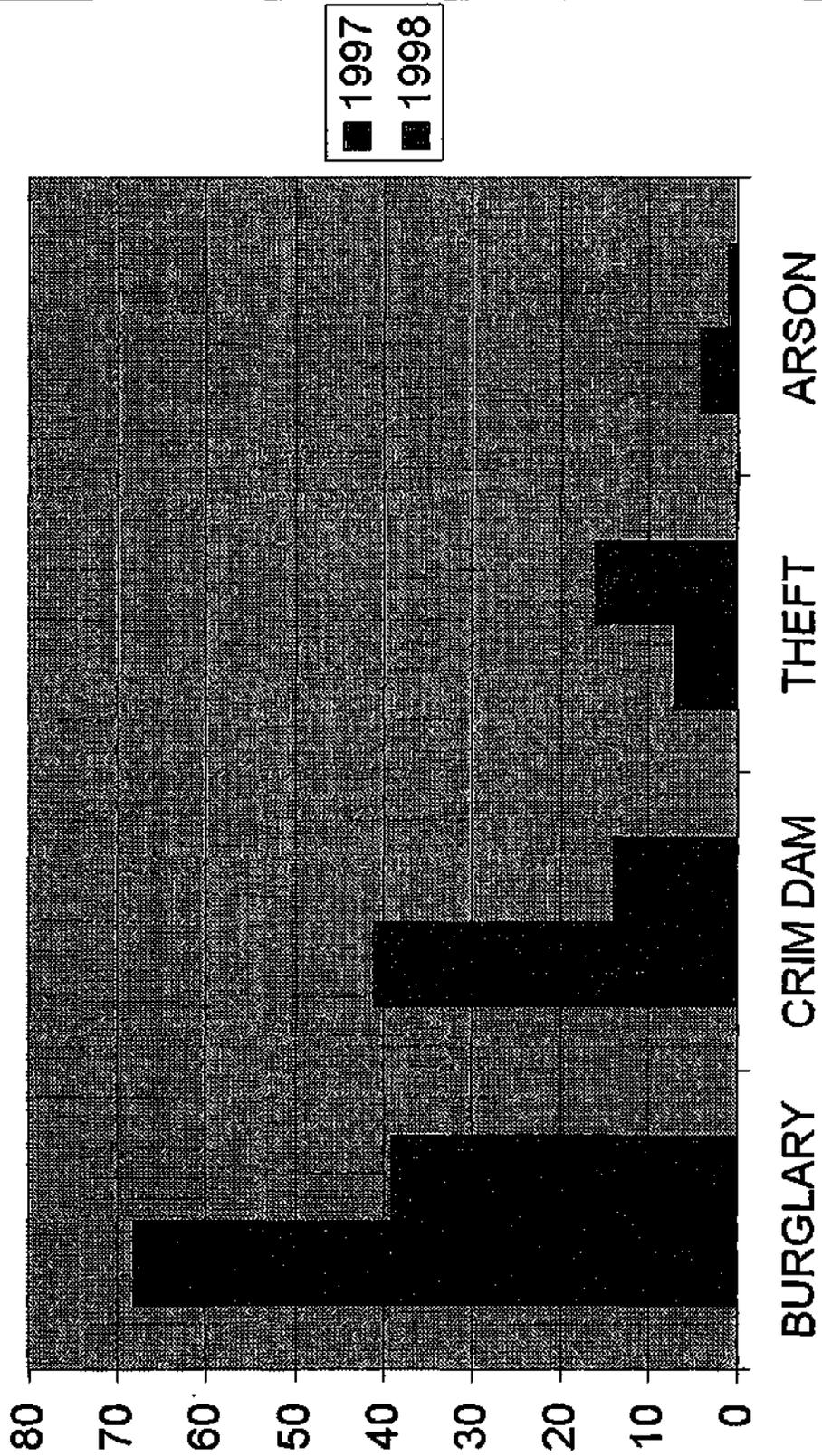
The officers identified there was a danger of jumping straight to the response stage before completing thorough analysis.

SERGEANT LYNN BEESTON

HARTLEPOOL POLICE COMMUNITY SAFETY TEAM
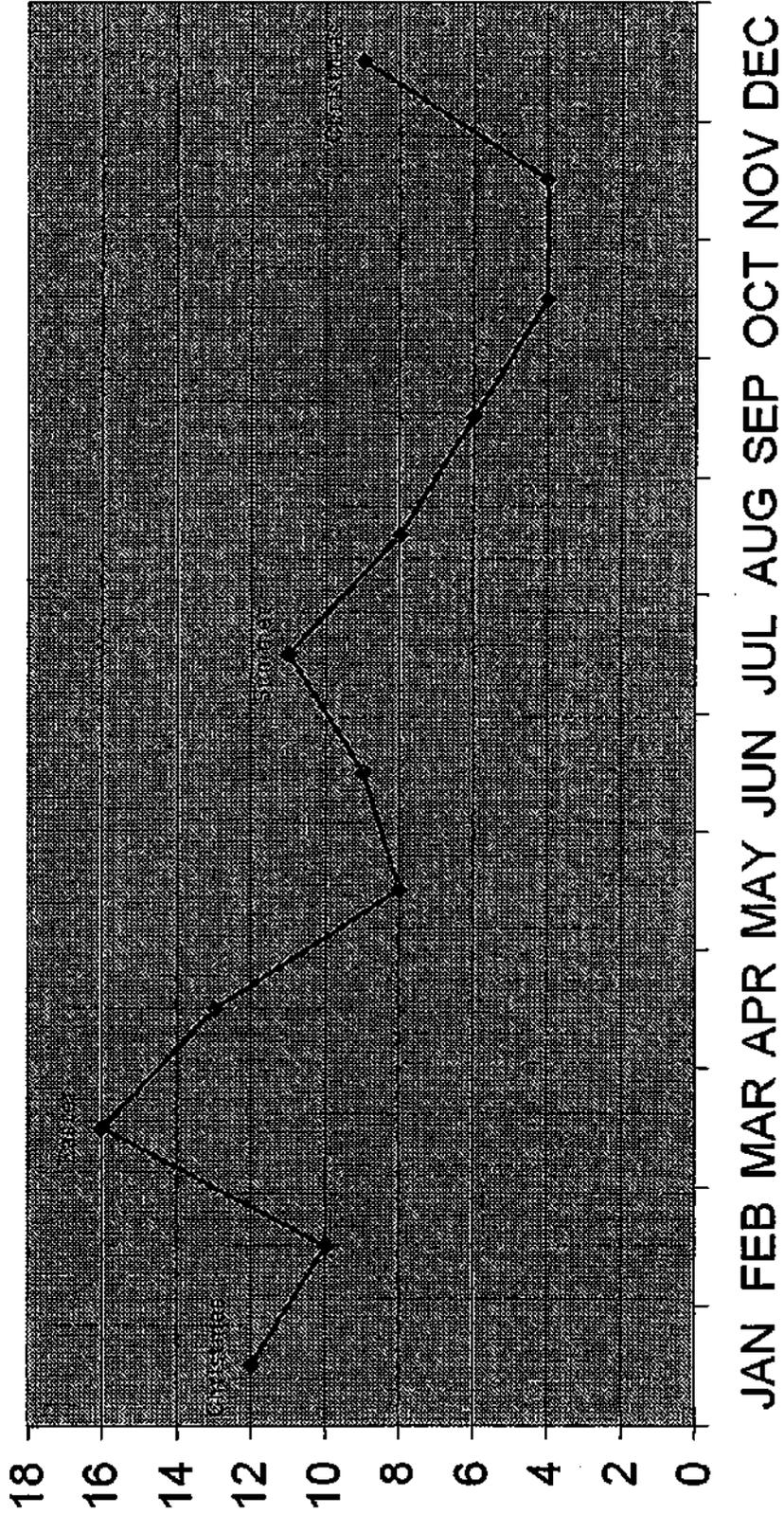
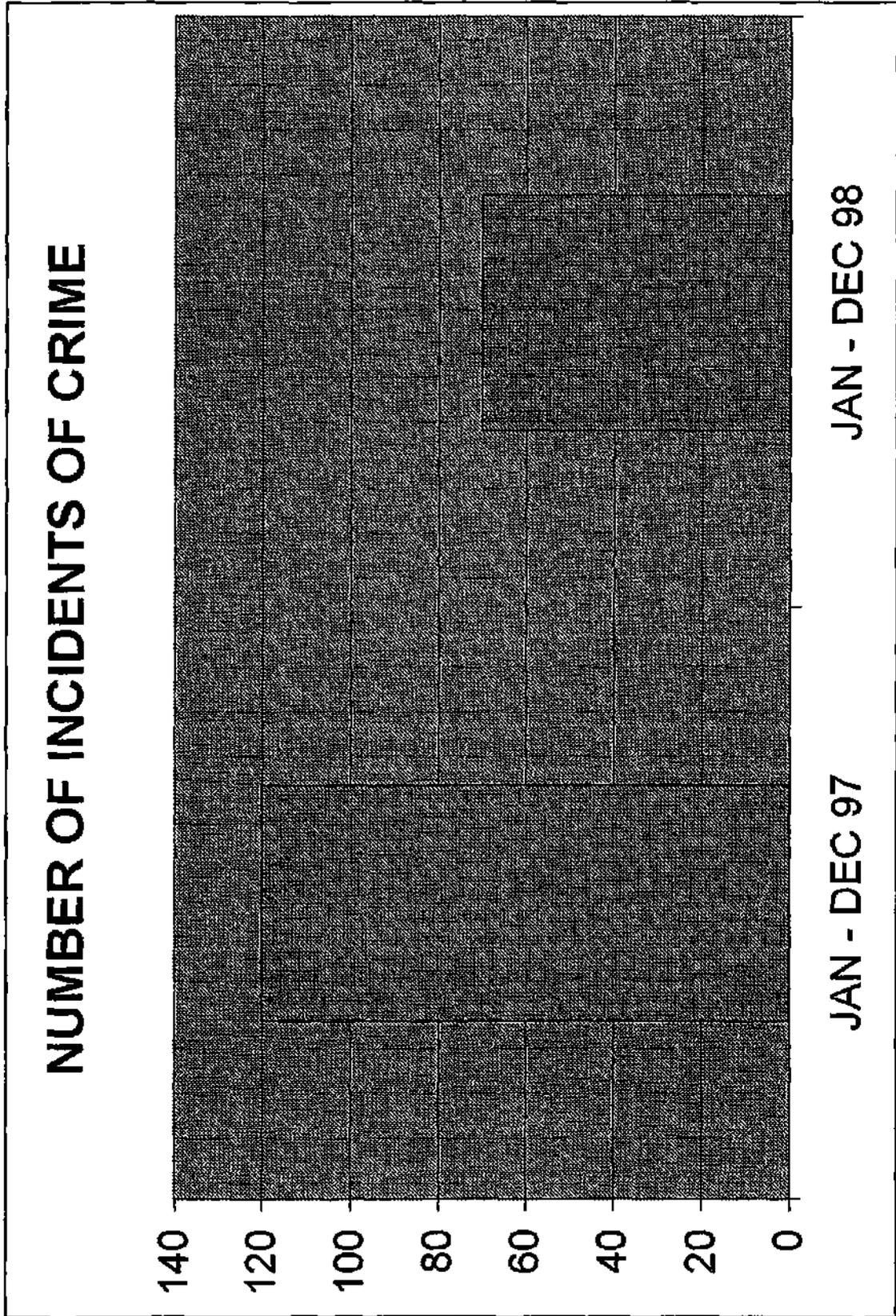# LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1   Crime types

Appendix 2   Incidents of crime by month 1997

Appendix 3   Incidents of crime 1997 and 1998

Appendix 4   Cost of incidents 1997 and 1998

CRIMES BY TYPE FOR 1997 & 1998

INCIDENTS OF CRIME
JANUARY - DECEMBER 1997

NUMBER OF INCIDENTS OF CRIME

COST OF INCIDENTS OF CRIME

Appendix 4