

## Tilley Award 2006

### Application form

Please ensure that you have read the guidance before completing this form. By making an application to the awards, entrants are agreeing to abide by the conditions laid out in the Guidance. Please complete the following form in full and within the word limit. Failure to do so could result in disqualification from the competition.

Completed application forms should be e-mailed to Tricia Perkins; [patricia.perkins@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:patricia.perkins@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

All entries must be received by noon on Friday 28th April 2006. No entries will be accepted after this time/date. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Tricia Perkins on 0207 035 0262. Any queries regarding other aspects of the awards should be directed to Michael Wilkinson on 0207 035 0247 or Lindsey Poole on 0207 035 0234.

Please tick box to indicate whether the entry should be considered for the main award, the criminal damage award or both;

Main award

Criminal Damage Award

Both Awards

#### 1. Details of application

Title of the project: Operation FOCUS

Name of force/agency/CDRP: South Yorkshire Police

Name of one contact person with position/rank (this should be one of the authors): DI Simon Weigold

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Name of endorsing senior representatives(s):

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Position and rank of endorsing senior representatives(s):

Assistant Chief Constable

Full address of endorsing senior representatives(s):

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## 2. Summary of application

During late 2005 thefts of CD radio systems from Ford Focus cars in the Barnsley area increased three fold, despite attacks on other vehicles remaining constant.

A partnership with police was formed identifying the problem and addressing it. Greater analysis found Focuses were specifically targeted because

- They can be entered by smashing the glass without the alarm activating
- The systems could be immediately removed from the fascia by inserting U clips into the body of the units
- There's a ready market for the sale of the stereos which are interchangeable with other Focus models

Ford manufacturers and dealers gave technical advice and lent a trap car to capture offenders, insurance companies would give discounts to Focus owners who took agreed steps to protect their vehicles, glass repairers, traffic wardens and carpark attendants gave proper figures for attacks and helped advise owners. Crimestoppers was used to gain information.

'eBay' assisted in identifying persons selling units, the CPS were consulted early to ensure best evidence, and drugs workers and DIP were used to divert offenders from crime. The partnership identified numerous steps owners could take to protect themselves; parking where the car can be seen, preferably near CCTV, fitting passive alarms, security marking their units, putting Allen screws in the holes in the units preventing extraction, and displaying stickers on the window "Could this be a sting car?"

The Group worked with victims, offenders and hot spot locations. Finance was less than £1,000. Results included

- 200% decrease in Focus attacks
- Stolen market for the units understood, disrupted and dismantled
- All 4008 Barnsley owners received specific instruction and practical help to prevent them being a victim
- Ford now taken action to rectify the Focus design faults
- 487 car CD stereos recovered from handlers selling on E Bay
- More stolen systems than ever before being handed back to owners
- New legislation such as ASBO's and Asset recovery used
- 8 forces have taken it as Best Practice and using it in their force areas

The programme was designed after great consultation between all parties relying on hard facts from personal knowledge such as interviews with prisoners, insurance claims, examination of the vehicles creating accurate profiles of suspects, crimes and possible handlers. The evaluation was similarly done in great detail comparing crimes numbers, amount of property recovered, Ford new policy, numbers of ASBOs and impending Asset recovery.

### 3. Description of project

#### Objectives of the Project

Having identified a huge increase in the number of Ford Focus cars being broken into in late 2005, the main objective of this project was to use all available data to establish the extent of the problem, and then find a sustainable long term solution to deal with it. This led to further investigation as to why Ford Focus cars were being targeted, and resulted in the following outcomes; design fault in the making of the earlier models means that the alarm would not activate if the window was broken, only if the door was opened. They were also being targeted because the CD system was easily removable using U clips (which the thieves carried about with them for the purpose). These fit into the body of the unit instantly releasing it from the fascia. Finally there was a ready market for these units which retail at £367 and are interchangeable with other systems in Focus models.



Analysis of drug testing of offenders showed that 83% of offenders took drugs and all blamed their addiction for the reason for the thefts.

In identifying the extent of the problem with thefts from Ford Focus cars, the following aims were defined:

- To reduce the number of Ford Focus cars being broken into by 100%
- To understand, disrupt and dismantle the market for stolen radio CD players by publicity and enforcement
- To educate the owners on the crime prevention measures to be taken
- To influence Ford to take practical measures to prevent attacks
- To increase the perception that offenders are being caught
- To recover 5% of stolen property returning it to the owners
- To divert offenders from crime and ensure that their addiction is addressed and dealt with

Thefts from Ford Focus cars is clearly of significant concern to the community, in particular Ford Focus owners, especially when Focuses are one of the most popular model of cars being bought at the moment. Cars are usually the second biggest investment after a house and an attack on this property always causes worry and cost. It has a further impact on the community by way of an increased fear of crime, smashed glass in car parks and the side of the road makes an area look rundown which exaggerates the fear of crime and also results in health and safety concerns. Repeat victimization is often interpreted as a personal attack/vendetta against the owner causing great distress. The truth is that their car has design faults which thieves exploit.

Police and agency involvement was operating under the Crime and Disorder Partnership.

The police and other appropriate agencies came together in identifying the problem. Barnsley council were involved by way of Traffic Wardens and car park attendants being fully briefed and aware of the problem feeding the police with details of crimes that were not normally recorded and they distributed leaflets. The partnership worked together and each agency was determined to make a difference. The problem was initially recognised in Barnsley, but liaison with other police Districts established that the problem was in fact spread across the whole force. The police used the National Intelligence Model coupled with the data from the other agencies named to create a profile of the crimes, offenders and possible handlers. Furthermore, a community analyst was utilised to catch all information that is relevant and comes direct from the community about the problem. The project is being driven by a senior officer with intimate knowledge of all aspects of the operation and a fervent desire to ensure success.

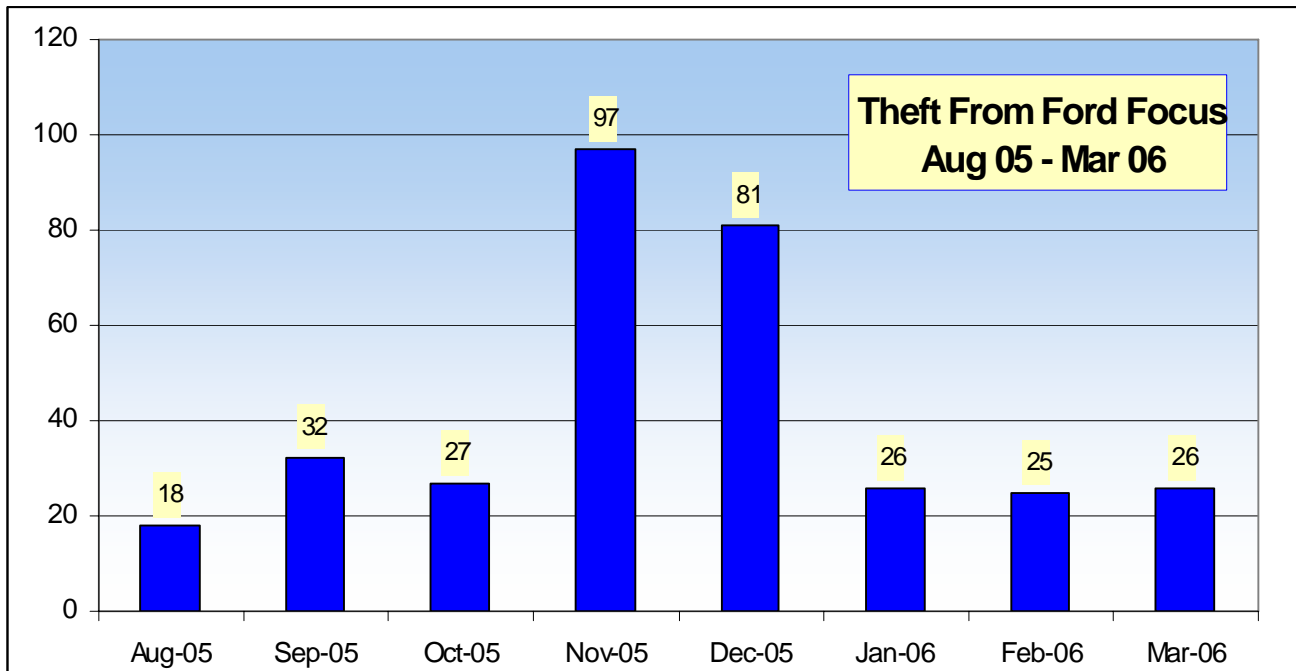
The Home Office was involved in putting pressure on Ford manufacturers to correct the design faults, this led to appropriate involvement by Ford to correct the faults. Drug Action Teams, Youth Offending Teams and Youth Services were and still are involved in proactively putting offenders on the road to rehabilitation. The Crown Prosecution Service was involved from the beginning to ensure all evidence met with set standards. Source units were utilised, every person arrested for car crime or handling was asked about any information they could provide and dedicated intelligence cells were properly resourced.

**Definition of the problem**

Reliable information sources were used to analyse the problem, and as most vehicle crime is unreported data was used from Ford and 'Autowindcreens', the main companies who repair damaged Ford windows in Barnsley and from traffic wardens and carpark attendants. This provided a more accurate indication of the scale of this crime. This information supplemented crimes initially reported to the police. Blue 8 Mapping software is used to map hot spot areas geographically across Barnsley.

Liaison between Districts throughout South Yorkshire is continuous in order to maintain a 'heads up' on trends. It has been established that thefts from Ford Focus cars is a problem across the whole of the country.

Analysis took place using the Police National Computer identifying all 4008 owners of Ford Focus cars who live in the Barnsley area.



The above graph displays the analysis of information in an easily visible format showing the extent of the problem.

Having used reliable sources to analyse the nature and extent of the problem, the following conclusions were reached in terms of the causes and underlying conditions of the problem. The Ford Focus has no passive alarm so there is no activation on the glass being broken, and this is why the glass is broken by the offender as, if they forced the door, the alarm would go off. The stereo is easily detachable from the car dashboard by the use of U clips which fit into the four holes in the unit and their insertion releases the unit immediately. Interviews with those persons caught shows that criminals find this crime of low risk but high return.

There was clearly a 'ready market' for disposal of the stereos and most crimes are being committed at night so there is little chance of the thief being seen and therefore caught. Such findings have allowed the police and partners to establish a tailored response.

Although a thorough analysis of the problem has now been conducted, there were inevitable gaps in our knowledge and in the information gathered. For instance initially the police were unaware that the alarm would not activate if the window was smashed. We were also unaware that the stereos are interchangeable with other units and people could update their cassette radio with a CD player. This explains the higher theft appeal.

These gaps in knowledge have been accounted for and subsequently overcome by working together with Ford to use their expert knowledge.

The CD car radios, if recovered, are difficult to trace without them being marked by a UV pen with the post code or with a serial number. Few people know to UV mark the stereos so many units in the past have been left unclaimed at police stations.

Upon identifying the nature and extent of the problem, appropriate agencies were consulted and involved. Neighborhood Watch schemes were used as a communication link using the Ringmaster system of reaching all members by sending a message automatically by telephone. The council run Street Services removed broken glass, put up notices warning motorists of the dangers in hot spot locations and put up additional lighting. An intelligence link was created and is being maintained with Districts within South Yorkshire and forces around the country. The police have engaged with members of the community as they have the most intelligence and gain the most from market closure.

Partnership involvement took place between the police and local and national media, Home Office, the Vehicle Reduction Partnership Group, Barnsley Ford dealers, Ford manufacturers, insurance companies, glass repairers, Crimestoppers, Trading Standards, and the Crown Prosecution Service. Everyone had a real intent to sort the problem out.

The council are setting up talking meters in Barnsley in car parks to warn motorists of the risks to their vehicles. The police are actively involved in removing the market place for stolen units, such as liaison with 'eBay' the online auction website. As a direct result 487 car CD players were recovered. Letters were sent to all persons who have had units stolen to look in their handbooks for the serial number, and Ford dealership examined all sales to get serial numbers from the cars they sold. Using the knowledge gained, which in itself was good publicity for the police and partnership, numerous systems were handed back to their owners.

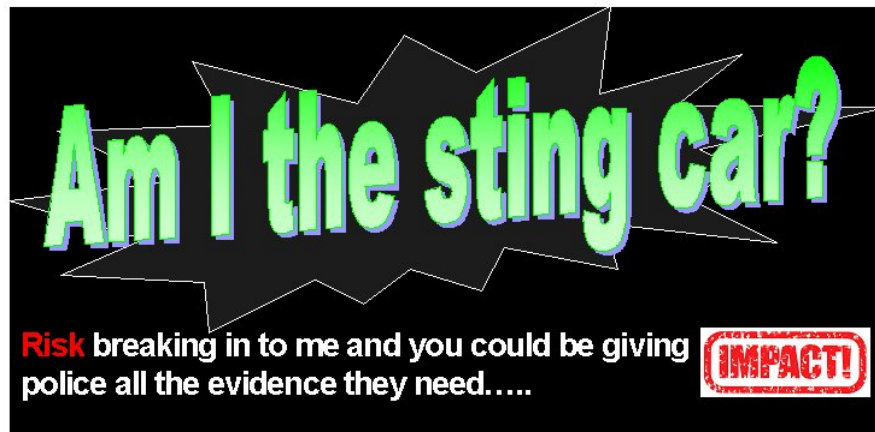
Partnership agencies now meet regularly to review and evaluate all aspects of the running of the operation and to improve performance.

### **Response to the Problem**

Following thorough analysis of the problem, the response was designed accordingly and included a full range of initiatives to target the problem. Undercover Test Purchase Officers were deployed to explore the market and discover who was stealing the units. 'eBay' was pressed for information about who locally was selling the units. Focus owners who visited Barnsley were advised by Police Community Support Officers, Traffic Wardens and carpark attendants on how to protect their cars. A sting Ford Focus car given free by the local Ford dealers was utilised to catch thieves in action. High visibility patrols were undertaken by officers and Local Policing Teams, fast track arrests are in place for any person on bail for attacking Focuses breaking their bail conditions bringing them before the courts within 24 hours. Early identification of potential subjects were put forward by the partnership for inclusion on the Prolific and Priority Offender Scheme. There is active involvement of the Drugs Intervention Programme carrot and stick approach to reach offenders.

Trading Standards gave Ford owners appropriate advice. Insurance companies now consider giving discounts to Focus owners who show they have taken the practical steps we agreed on. Crimestopper details were given to the public and criminals. Anyone detained at a police station would see the freephone number as they entered the custody area and sprayed on the walls of each cell.

The partnership created a comprehensive information pack giving advice, and useful material to 4008 Ford Focus owners. We advised them to park the car where it can be easily seen by others preferably where there is CCTV coverage, purchase a passive alarm to overcome the problem of the built in alarm not activating when the window is broken, security mark their stereo with the security pen supplied in the pack, use Allen screws supplied in the pack to fill the 4 holes in the stereo to prevent easy extraction, and display the sticker supplied in the pack in the car saying 'Am I the sting car?'



The responses yielded from the analysis results have incorporated a new way of thinking that aims to improve quality of life for the public. Communication links with appropriate agencies are continuously being progressed leading to the enhanced success for the overall problem of thefts from Ford Focuses.

We needed to identify up and coming car thieves and this was helped by direct liaison with the probation service. Another deterrent was to increase police activity in the areas catching offenders and handlers then publicizing the prosecutions.

When we recovered car CD players we wrote to all persons to have reported the theft of a similar item who did not at the time provide a serial number telling them where in their handbook they would find the number, this resulted in a large percentage of radios being returned to the owners. We have now put in place instructions to crime management staff to specifically ask for the serial number and tell the owners where they can find it.

Numerous responses were chosen to tackle the problem, these being decided by the collaboration between the police, community and partner agencies. This resulted in having sufficient resources and structure to deliver the response successfully. Strategic, tactical and coordinating meetings showed a multi agency approach was essential. The partnership group that was formed met regularly and drove action. The drive for success meant that action was taken immediately on 'hot intelligence', finance being provided from the partnership. This prompt action also generated more intelligence from the community. The object was to prevent the problem from reemerging.

Other forces had acted alone doubling the patrols at night which resulted in resources being directed from other pressing needs and response times for attending other incidents were lengthened. This is not the road we wanted to go down. We wanted a permanent solution to the problem, and not at the expense of other priority police work.

The intervention was so effective that eight other forces have taken on the lessons in how to deal with the crime effectively. Numerous calls were received from members of the public expressing their thanks after information packs were sent to them. As a result the police and the partnership received good publicity, which represents the organisations in a very positive light. IMPACT on crime was used as a marketing icon, a message tailored to each activity.

Six drug addicts who were stealing to pay for drugs are now receiving treatment under DIP and others receive after-care when released from prison. Three are now in full time employment. The new legislation is being used for Inspectors to authorize drug tests to identify the persons on drugs and to get them seen by drugs workers.

Each success was publicised and ensured further information from the public by advertising the Crimestoppers free phone number. Crimestoppers information increased by 110%.

Fewer offenders returned to this crime as we were forcing them to change their lifestyle by DIP structured group work, peer support, and community links.

Partnership working was a key element in the development of this project. There was, and still is strong collaboration and coordination by the partnership, and funding is being made available from the public and private sector. Every drug addict nominal is put through DIP. There is robust tasking, co-ordination and liaison with other forces.

Ownership is shared between all interested parties, all agencies and a committed policing team. At all meetings there was a senior level attendance and friendly and constructive relationship promoting true information sharing 'how as well as what'. Offenders went into treatment and accessed 'wrap around' services with focus being on those who needed it, the proactive work of persistent outreach workers has forced six offenders into treatment.

With regard to the handlers, action is being taken under the new Asset Recovery System to try and seize assets. The council assisted with obtaining additional intelligence for ASBOs which we used to restrict the movements and associations of offenders.

Another advantage with the partnership approach was that equipment was in many cases provided free of charge. A Ford Focus car was lent to the police by Ford to catch offenders. Leaflets were also produced free by some agencies. The original budget from the partnership was £100 which was later extended to £958. The publicity including stickers, information packs and postage cost £658, the screws that fit into the units cost £300 (but were only 8p each).

Fords long term response was to ensure that the defects that led to their cars being targeted were corrected. They also held car clinics where they gave away the screws and stickers, as well as providing them when the cars were being serviced

Regular reviews were undertaken through tactical assessments and problem profiles. Robust, regular and clear analysis and assessments were completed with regular meetings to ensure the smooth running of the project. Following one such meeting there was an agreed change to be made which would impact on the project, this change was publicizing the sting car in an effort to deter further attacks.

The chosen responses have proven to be sustainable over the past five months, in particular this good practice has been disseminated to eight other forces, highlighting the transferability of this new approach. Finance was made available to make the project sustainable and South Yorkshire Police are continuously building on the success of the project.

The responses have been creative in that they have used the new ASBO legislation on offenders, asset recovery is achieved through the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, and most notably, the project has now mainstreamed into normal police activity and proven to be an intervention yielding maximum effect. It provided the best ever consideration of victims needs making every effort to advise them, prevent them from being a victim and even if they do become a victim put processes in place to ensure the serial number is obtained so there is a good chance of recovering their CD system.

### **Evaluation of the Intervention**

After initially identifying the problem and working through the response process we have now produced a package which includes all the analysis, all details of the agencies involved, all the action that was carried out, and all the subsequent analysis to show how effective the process was. In the package we also outline the lessons we learnt. The sting car we used was in the end not found to be as effective as we would have hoped, however the publicity from using it was effective. On reflection we would have used it less on the ground where it tied up police resources but advertise its use more, as a deterrent.

Other forces have heard of the operation through the publicity we have given, and our dramatic effect on the figures of Ford Focus attacks, which in other areas continue to escalate.

All the measures were made to reassure the public and provide excellent service to victims. We found that the public

thrived on the feedback we provided and encouraged them to come forward with further information (Crimestopper information doubled). Repeat victims who felt vulnerable were reassured with the information packs.

The crime prevention officers who did surveys of all the hotspots and obtained the Allen screws were at the forefront of this initiative and deserve some real credit.

The evidence collected to date has shown that the chosen responses have achieved what was intended, it has in fact exceeded what was initially intended by way of vastly reducing the number of thefts from Ford Focus cars, the number of arrests, the publicity and advertising for both South Yorkshire Police and Ford, and the fact that eight other forces have adopted the initiative.

To measure how effective we have been we need to refer to the aims we set after the scanning stage

- **To reduce the number of Ford Focus cars being broken into by 100%:**  
Doubled it measured by crime reported to police and partners
- **To understand, disrupt and dismantle the market for stolen radio CD players by publicity and enforcement:**  
Largest recovery of car radios from street crime in the country, information from persons caught that market has dried up.
- **To educate the owners on the crime prevention measures to be taken:**  
Wrote to every owner in the Barnsley district.
- **To influence Ford to take practical measures to prevent attacks:**  
New Ford vehicles are protected in that the stereo no longer has the holes for easy extraction and standard models have an alarm system operating when the window is smashed.
- **To increase the perception that offenders are being caught:**  
20 articles in the press, 15 broadcasts on the radio and by word of mouth from persons caught measured by interviews with persons in custody now regarded as a hard crime because it could be a trap car and the market has dried up.
- **To recover 5% of stolen property returning it to the owners:**  
Quadrupled this amount measured by huge recoveries.
- **To divert offenders from crime and ensure that their addiction is addressed and dealt with:**  
Some offenders got employment all helped by drugs workers to get off drugs. In all 24 persons targeted all successful.

The commitment of the partnership members was excellent, senior managers attended meetings and went away with clear actions to complete before the next meeting. Meetings were always well attended and focused. If someone was not able to attend a deputy was always sent.

The project used a systematic methodology breaking down every part of the problem to discover underlying causes. The partnership was used to address every part and find a sustainable solution. The principles used can now be used for every other type of crime problem.

The evaluation was extensive and showed that the problem had been dissected to such an extent that it was fully understood. The underlying causes were correctly identified and the solution was more than effective. The interviews with persons arrested formed part of the process and showed that their perception of it being an easy low risk crime had changed.

The principles of this initiative are now being replicated within the force to tackle other crime issues and incorporated into the Forces Vehicle Crime Strategy.