



OPERATION BLINK...

AND YOU'LL MISS IT

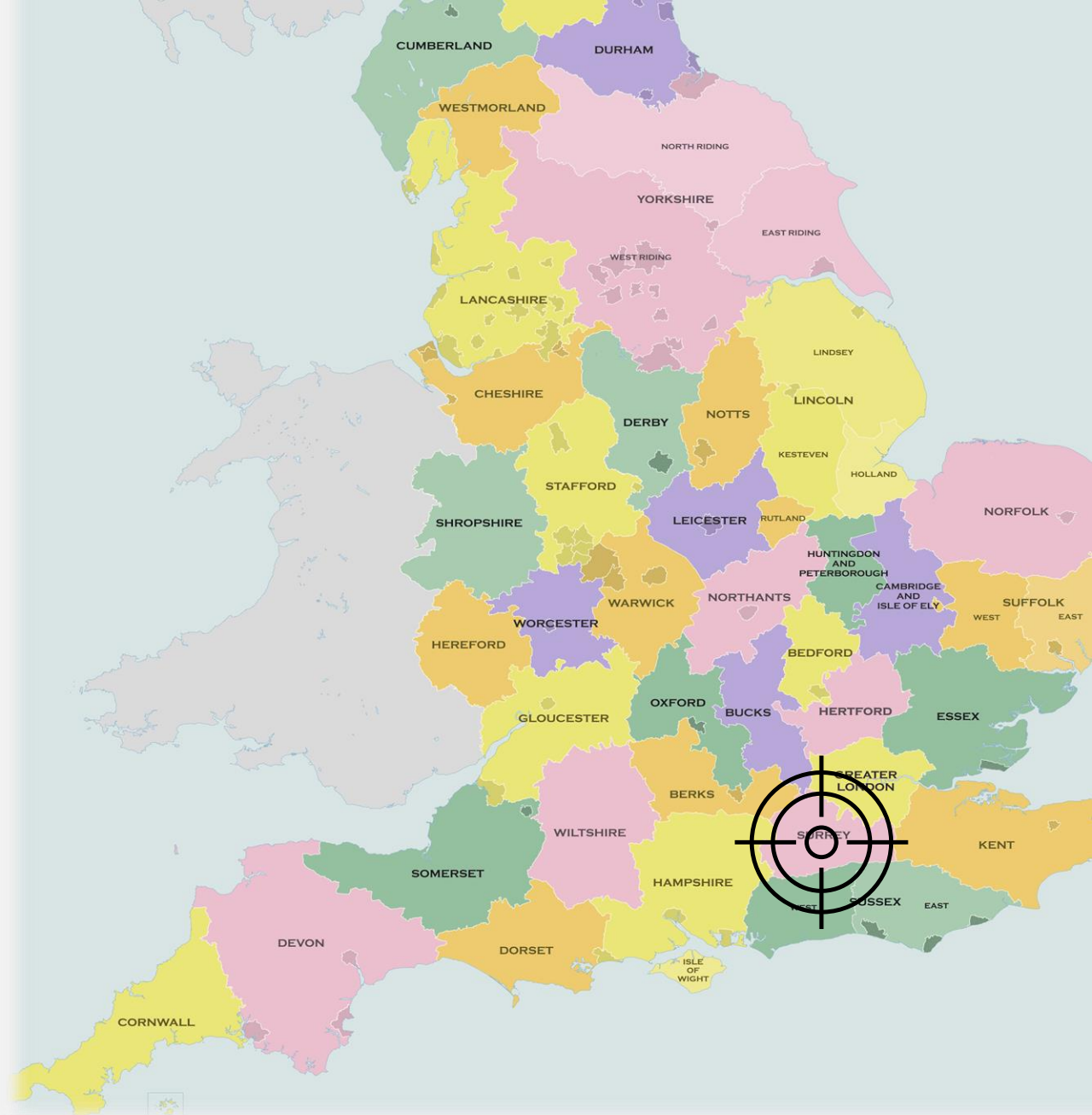
SURREY POLICE (UK)



Firstly... a little about us

The county of Surrey (UK)

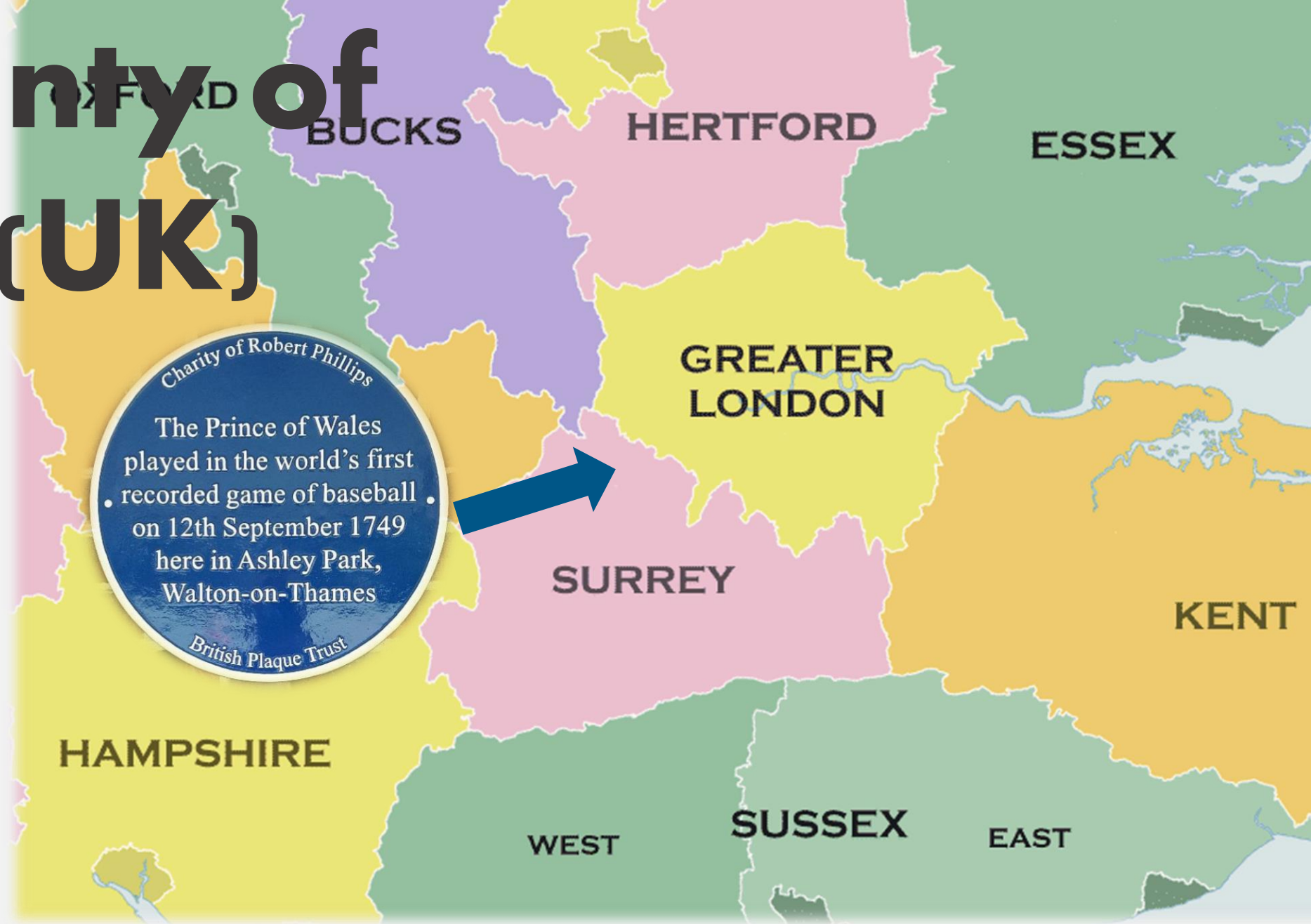
1 of 48 counties in England



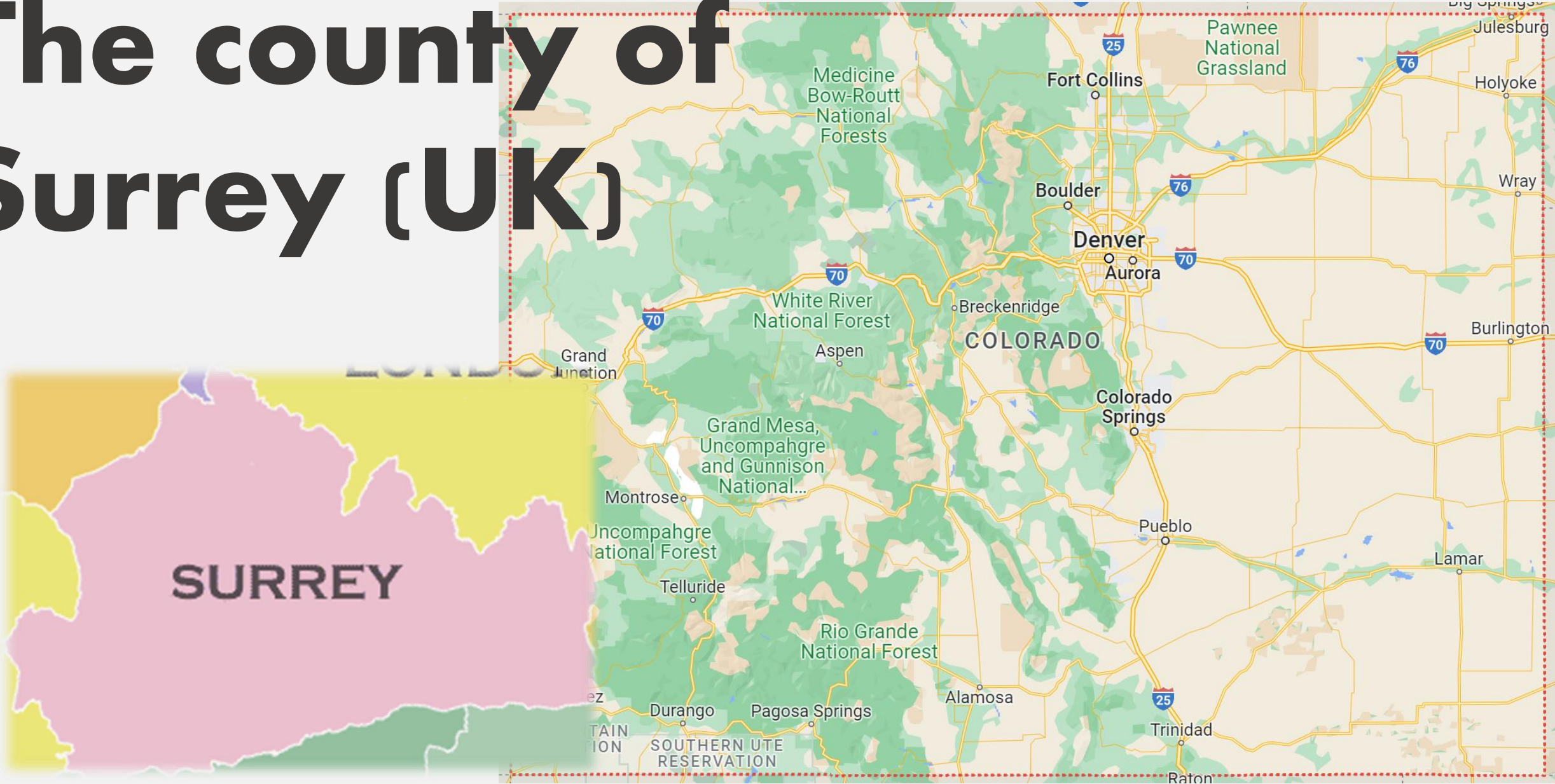
The county of Surrey (UK)

Population: 1.2m

Area: 1,663 km²



The county of Surrey (UK)

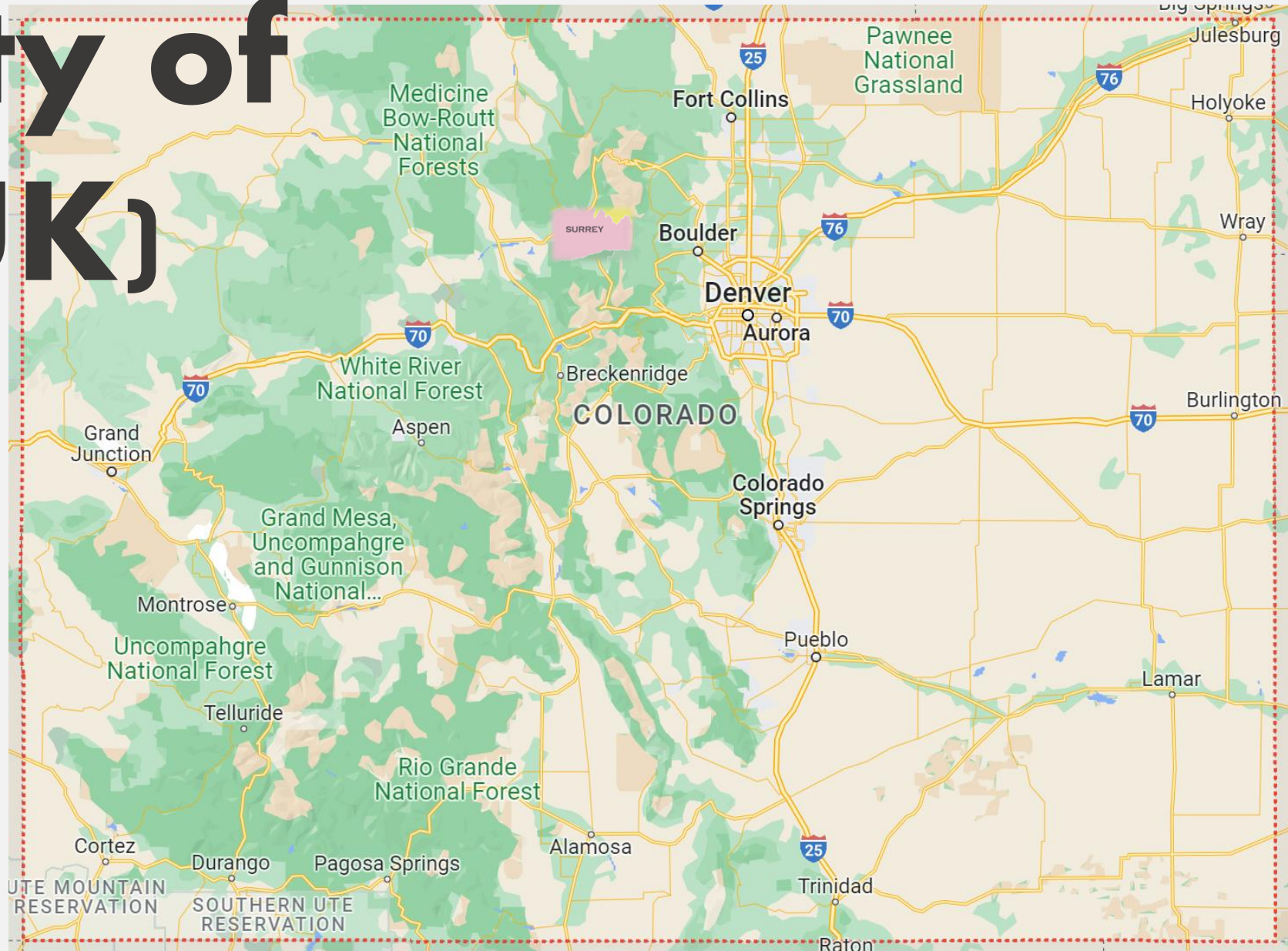


The county of Surrey (UK)

**Surrey = 0.06%
the land mass of
Colorado**

but...

**Surrey = 20.48%
of Colorado's
population**



Surrey Police

Op Blink's Co-Leads



**Detective Chief
Inspector
Kate Hyder**

**In late 2020, Kate was an
Inspector in Surrey's Serious
Organised Crime Unit (SOCU).**



**Problem Solving
Tactical Advisor
Matt Sessions**

**She and the team had not used
Problem-Oriented Policing before.**

Surrey Police

Op Blink's Co-Leads



**Detective Chief
Inspector
Kate Hyder**

In late 2020, Matt was new in post and the force's 'Problem Solving Team' was only a few months old.



**Problem Solving
Tactical Advisor
Matt Sessions**

The Problem Solving Team:

- **1 Chief Inspector**
- **2 Analysts**
- **2 Tactical Advisors**



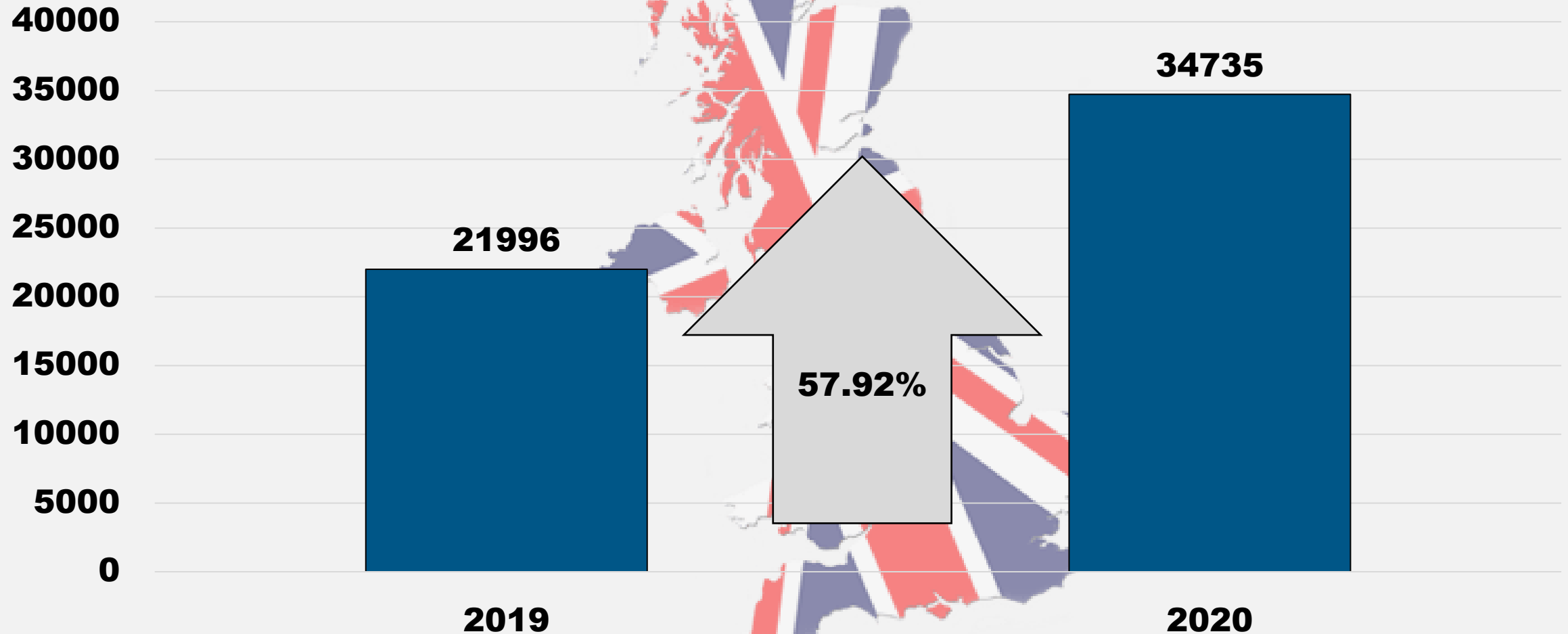
Scanning

What's a catalytic converter theft?



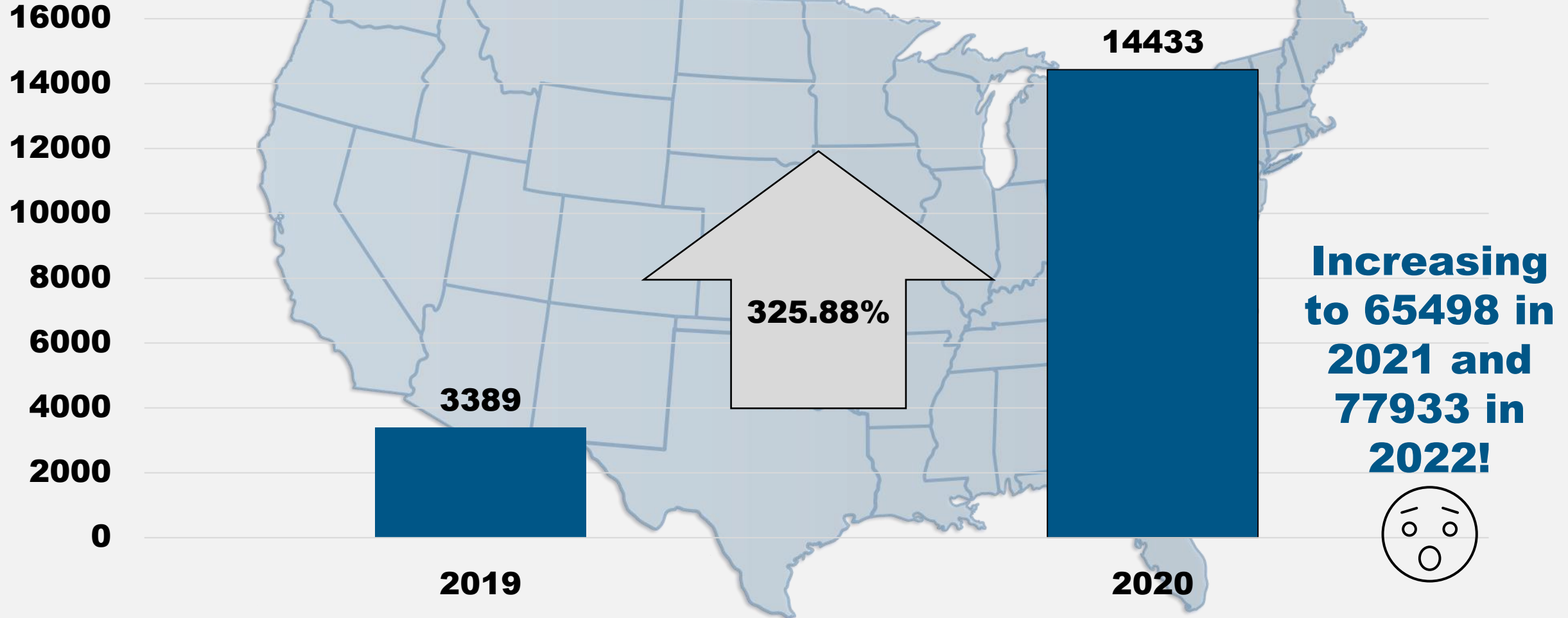
To what extent was it a problem?

UK Catalytic Converter Thefts *OPAL/Sky News



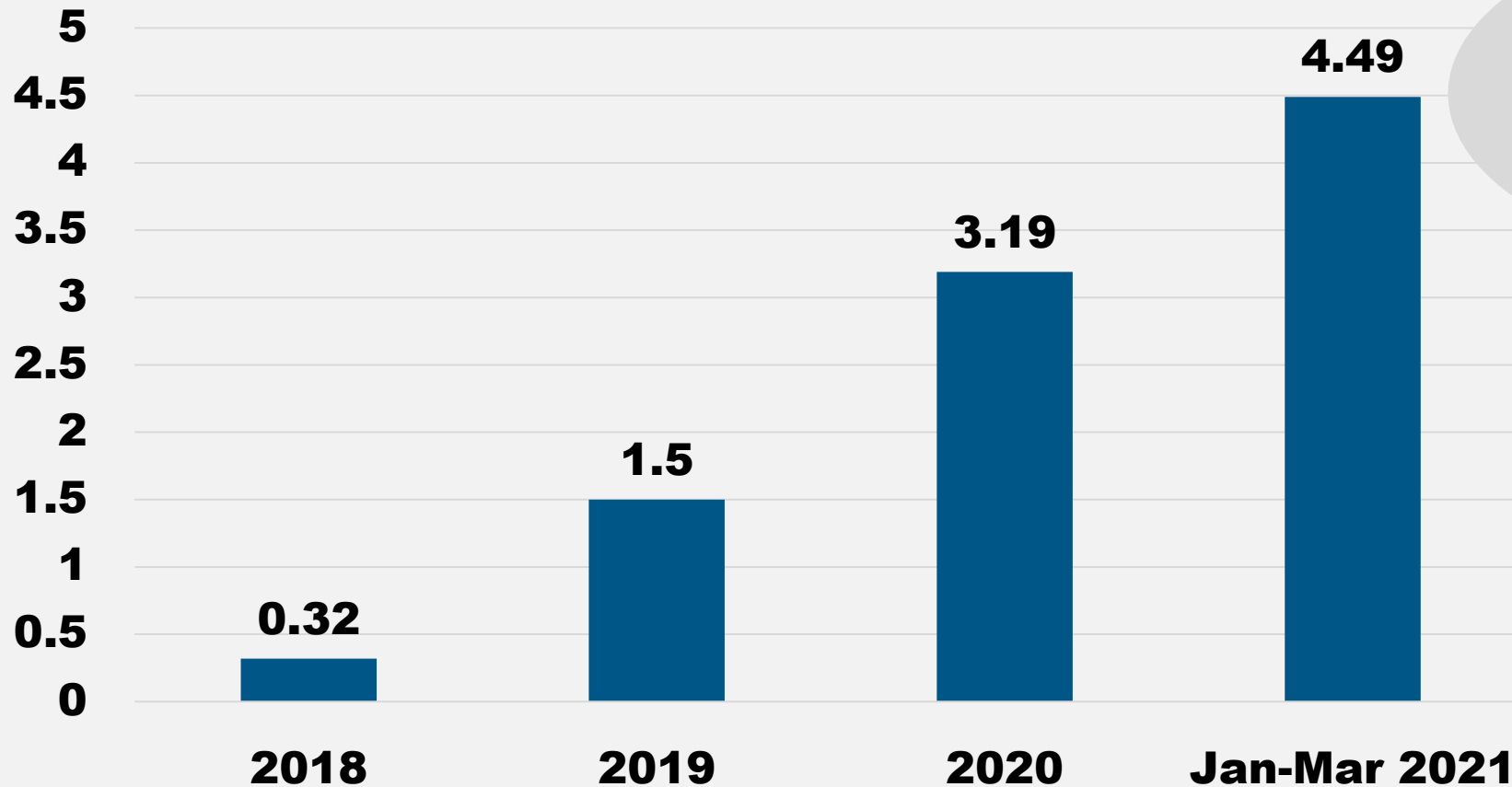
To what extent was it a problem?

USA Catalytic Converter Thefts *BeenVerified



To what extent was it a problem?

No. of Surrey Catalytic Converter Thefts (per day)



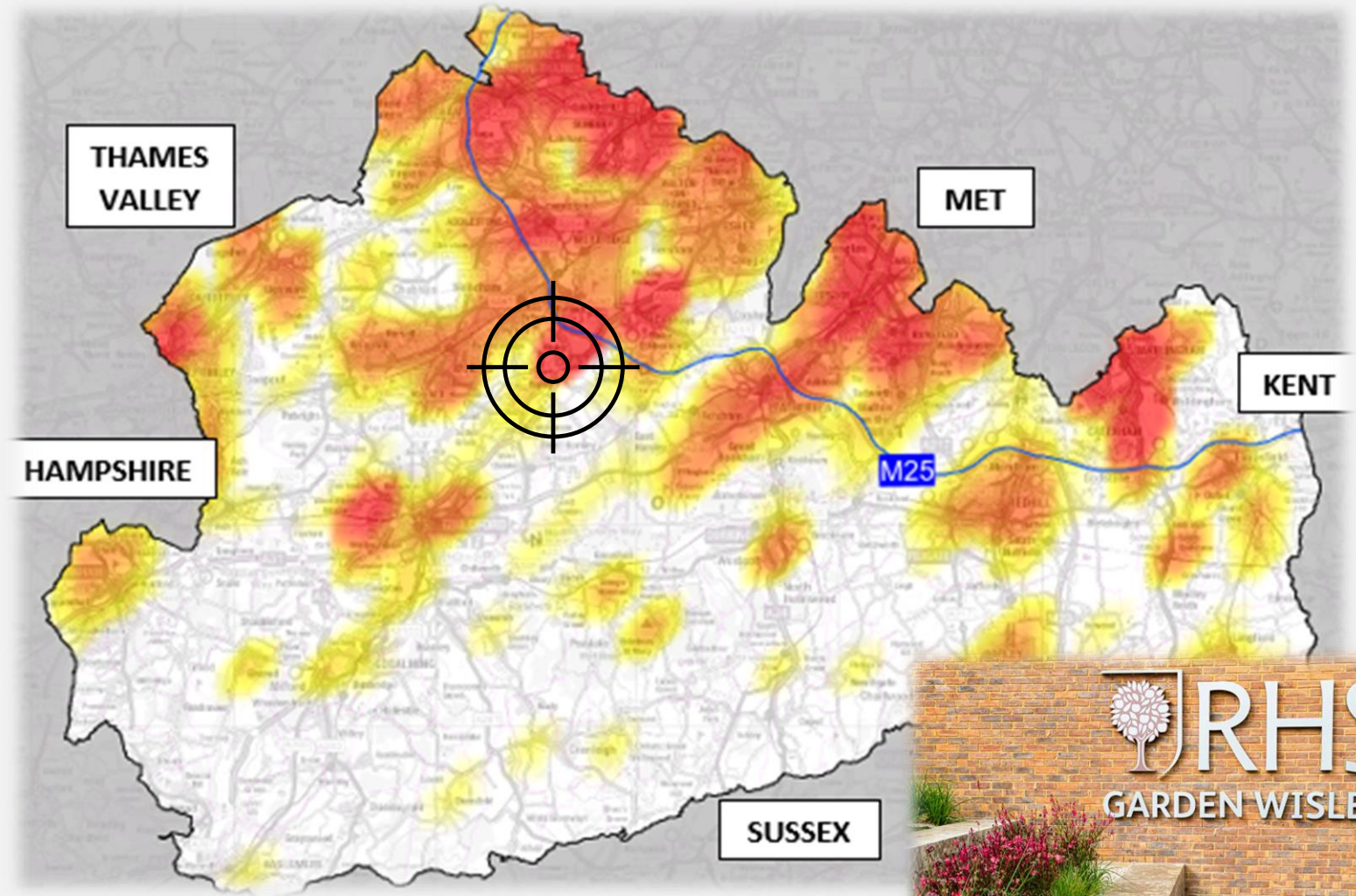
What are Surrey Police doing?



What was our specific problem?

Location

Victim/
Target

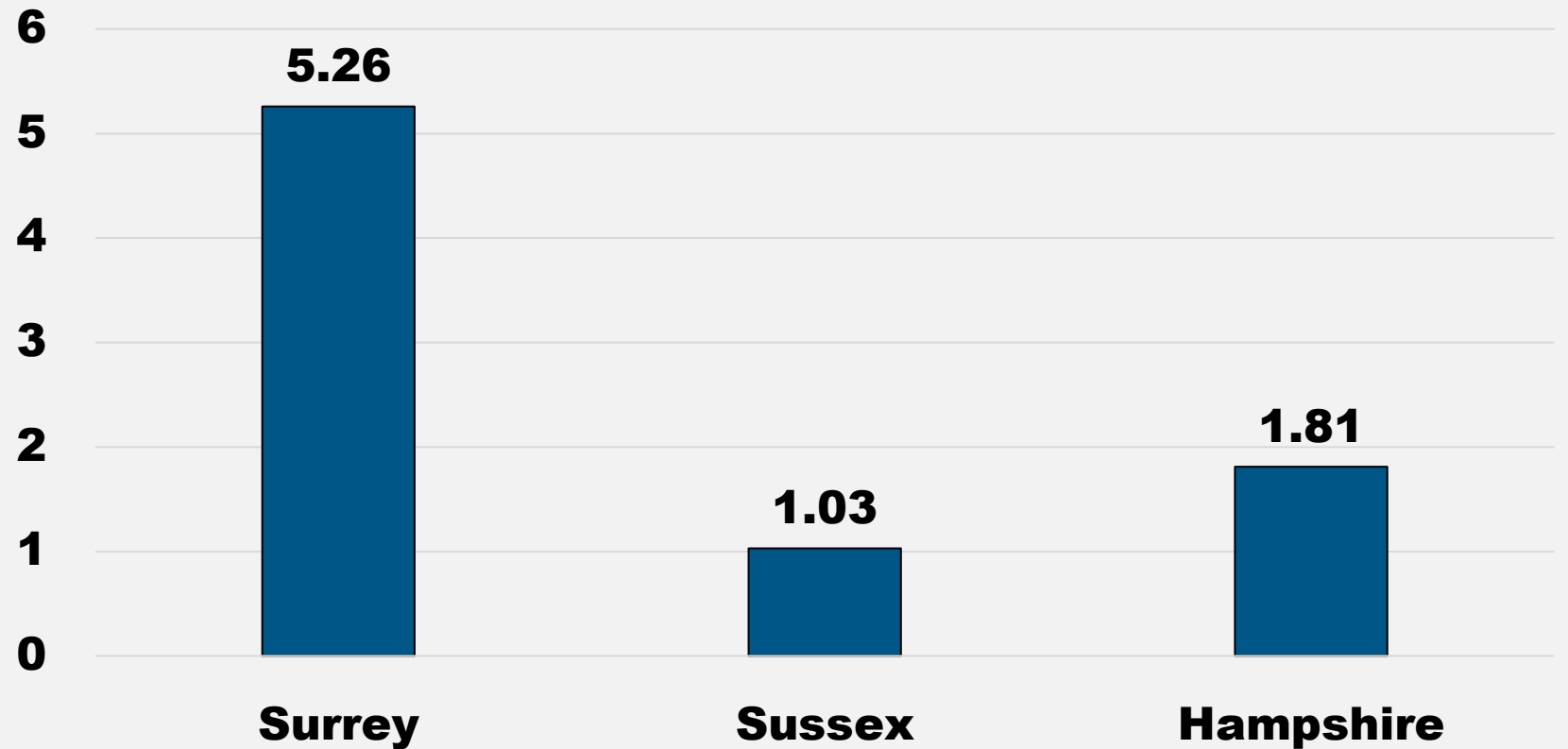


What was our specific problem?

Thefts per 10,000 persons
Jan 2020-Mar 2021
(6 month avg.)

Location

Victim/
Target



What was our specific problem?

○ **Location**

**Victim/
Target**

○ **Offender**

- **Hybrid cars**
 - **Toyota Prius/Auris**
 - **Honda Jazz/CR-V**
 - **Lexus RX**
- **Average victim age – 52**
- **Average victim cost – £1,500 *Admiral**
- **Often called their breakdown service first**

What was our specific problem?

○ Location

○ **Victim/
Target**

○ Offender

“
They are thinking about writing off my car and I need it for work as I'm a caregiver...
I'm absolutely devastated”

“
This crime is getting out of hand. My car was targeted twice within 8 days...
I am a single mum and this is just wrong”

What was our specific problem?

○ **Victim/
Target**

○ **Offender**

○ **Temporal**

- **Travelling Organised Crime Groups (OCGs)**
 - **Small groups**
 - **Brazen**
 - **Use violence if needed**
- **False registration plates and lack of suspects/arrests**
- **Lack of intelligence on disposal routes**

What was our specific problem?

○ **Offender**

○ **Temporal**

- **Thefts rising in recent years**
- **Spates of offending**
- **Offending peaked between 10:00-15:00, but poor data quality**

What was our specific problem?

A small number of Organised Crime Groups are travelling into Surrey to steal catalytic converters. They do this with great ease and often steal multiple in one go. They mostly target older hybrid cars, in car parks, in the middle of the day.

A blue-tinted background image of a microscope, showing the eyepiece, objective lenses, and the specimen stage. The image is semi-transparent and serves as a backdrop for the text.

Analysis

Why was it happening so often?



Location

Offender

Reason	Opportunity?
Surrey- the ideal target	
Security <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guards• CCTV• Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)• Police patrols	
Locational design <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entrances/exits• Size• Foliage (e.g large trees)	

Why was it happening so often?

○ **Location**

○ **Offender**

○ **Victim/
Target**

Reason	Opportunity?
Easy to complete with little skill	Catlocs
Disposal routes	✗
Small no. of OCGs	A few successes = big reductions

Why was it happening so often?

○ **Offender**

**Victim/
Target**

Reason	Opportunity?
Victims owned the wrong car	✗
Physical protection for target	Catlocs
Deterrent on target	Forensic Marking
Parking style?	✗

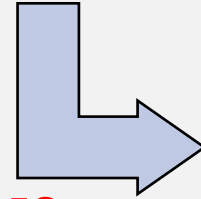
Why was it happening so often?

○ Offender

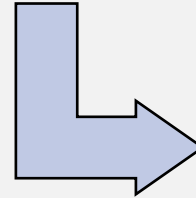
○ Victim/
○ Target

Why?

It's so easy

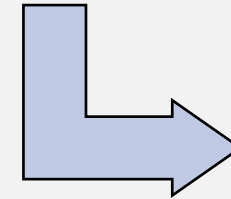


There's no risk



Why?

94.7% don't report via 999



Why?

No one knows what it is!

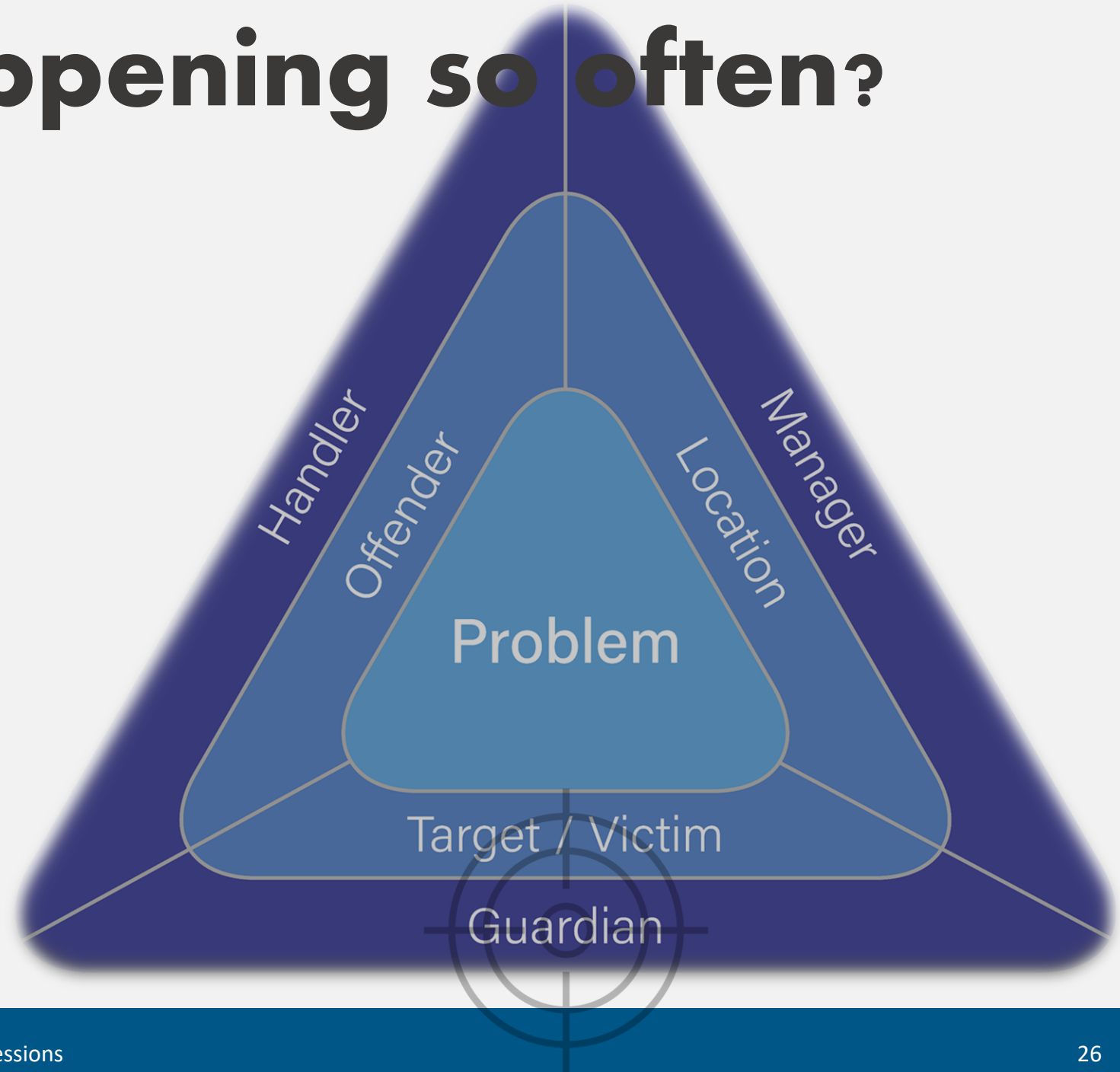
The Five Whys

The Four Whys

Why was it happening so often?

○ Offender

○ **Victim/
Target**



Why was it happening so often?

○ Offender

○ Victim/
Target



Why was it happening so often?

○ Offender

○ Victim/
Target

PROTECT MARK PARK

Protect your car by asking your dealer if they can give you any advice on locks or guards that are approved by the vehicle manufacturer and tested to Sold Secure Gold.

Mark your catalytic converter with a forensic marker and register your converter to make it harder for thieves to dispose of.

Park your car somewhere well-lit and overlooked, amongst as many cars as possible. Try to park so the converter can't be easily reached - close to a wall or fence. Try not to park at the end of the row if there are free spaces.



If you're a victim of catalytic converter theft,

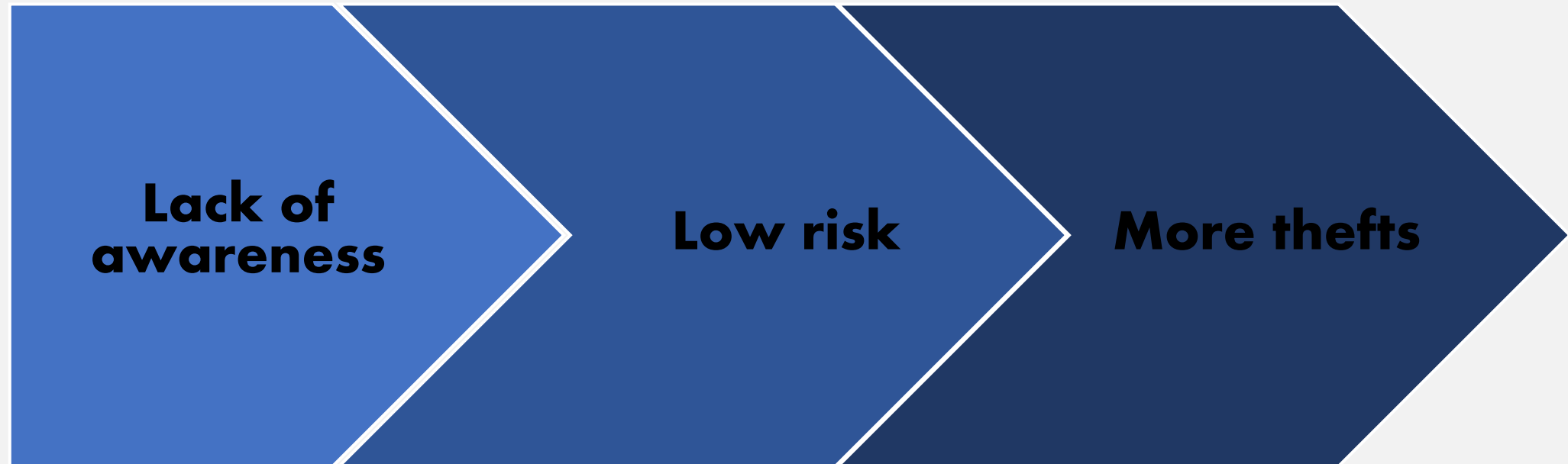
Call 101

If at a railway station, call British Transport Police on

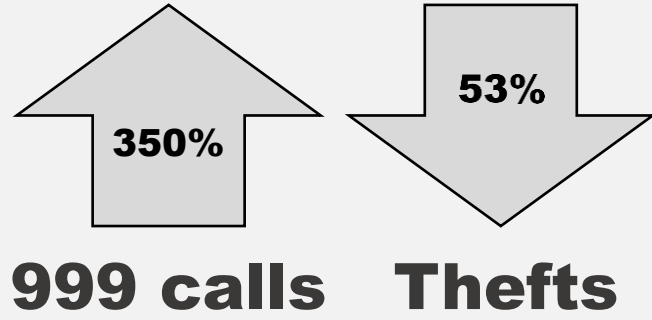
**0800 40 50 40
or Text 61016**



The hypothesis



Testing the hypothesis



The objective



A blue-tinted photograph of a person working on a car's engine. The person is wearing a dark shirt and pants, and is leaning over the engine compartment. The car is a silver Honda, with the Honda logo visible on the front grille. The word "Response" is overlaid in white text in the center of the image.

Response

Education, education, education

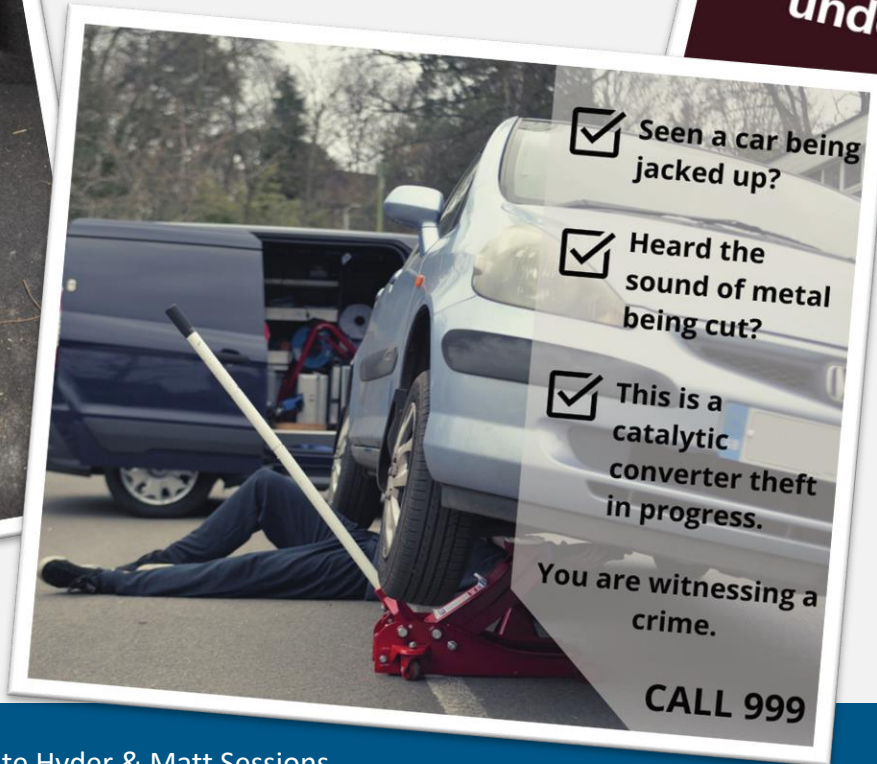


Education, education, education

Recognise this?

It helps to clean a car's exhaust fumes, and contains valuable metals, putting it high on any metal thief's wish list...

That's right, it's a catalytic converter



- Seen a car being jacked up?
- Heard the sound of metal being cut?
- This is a catalytic converter theft in progress.

You are witnessing a crime.

CALL 999

Catalytic converter thefts can happen in under a minute

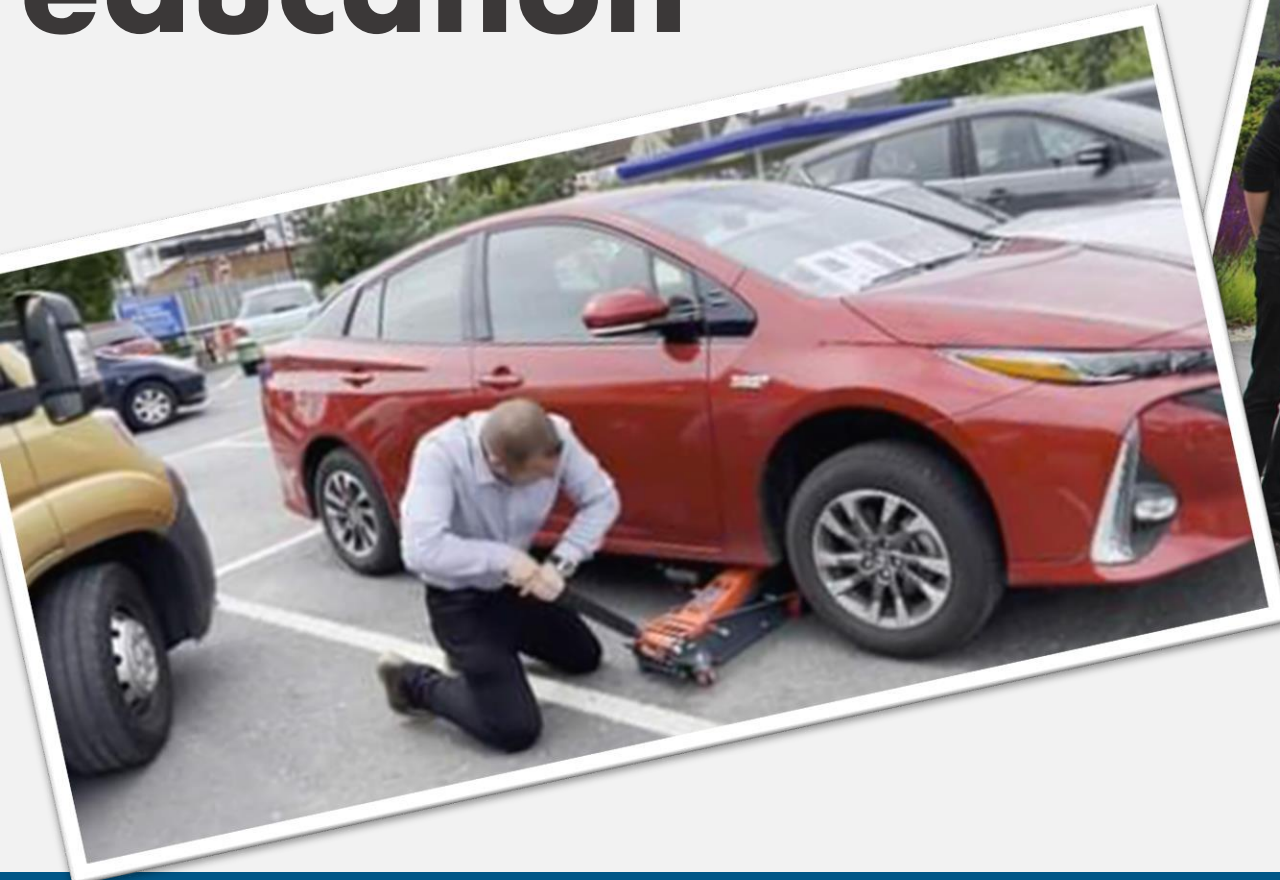
Blink...and you'll miss it...



Education, education, education



Education, education, education



Education, education, education



Education, education, education

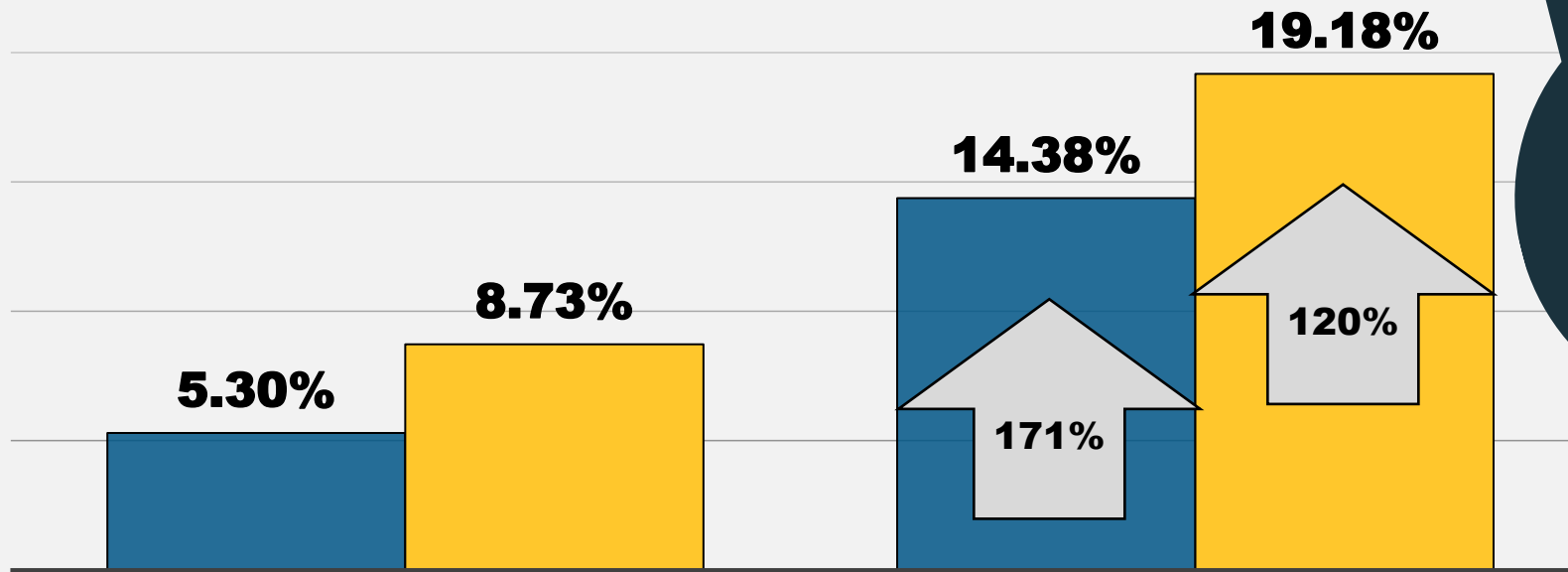




Assessment

Did it work?

Change in rate of calls via 999 & suspect vehicles identified (pre-response & during response rollout)



Pre-response

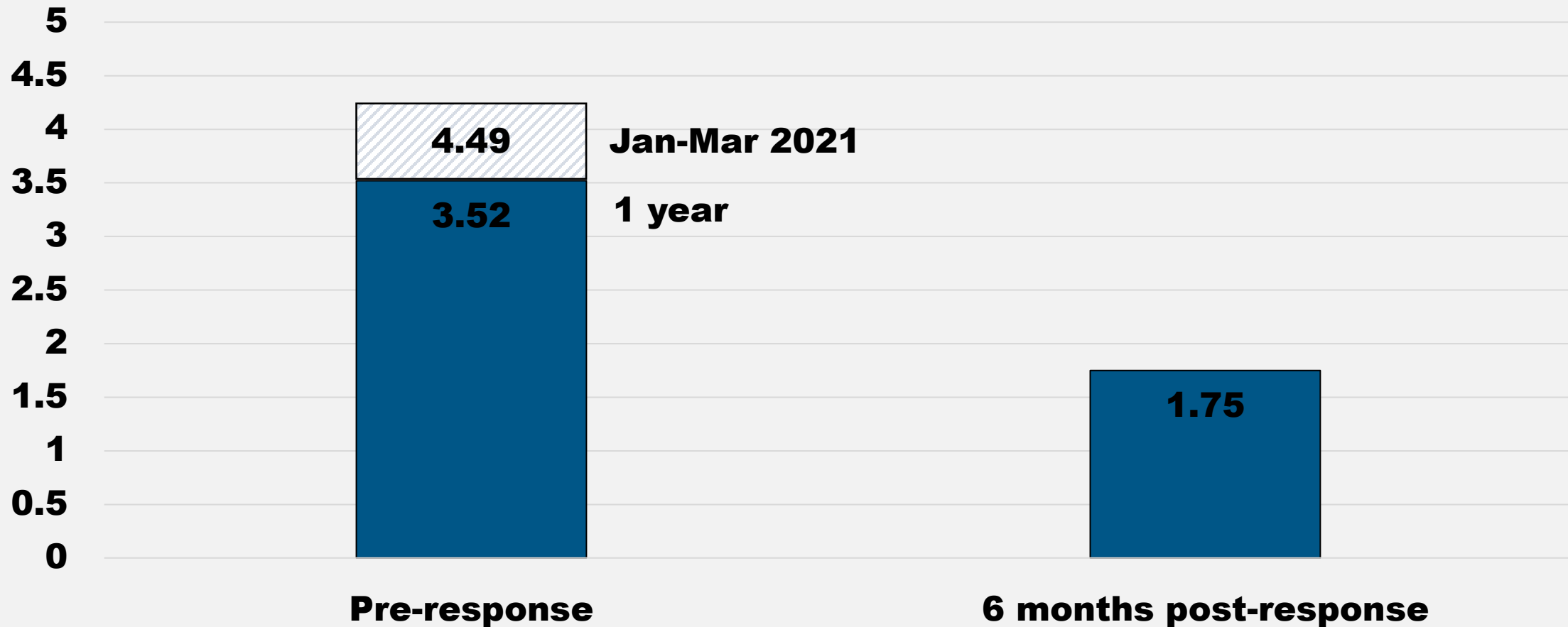
During response rollout

■ % of calls via 999

■ % of incidents with a suspect vehicle

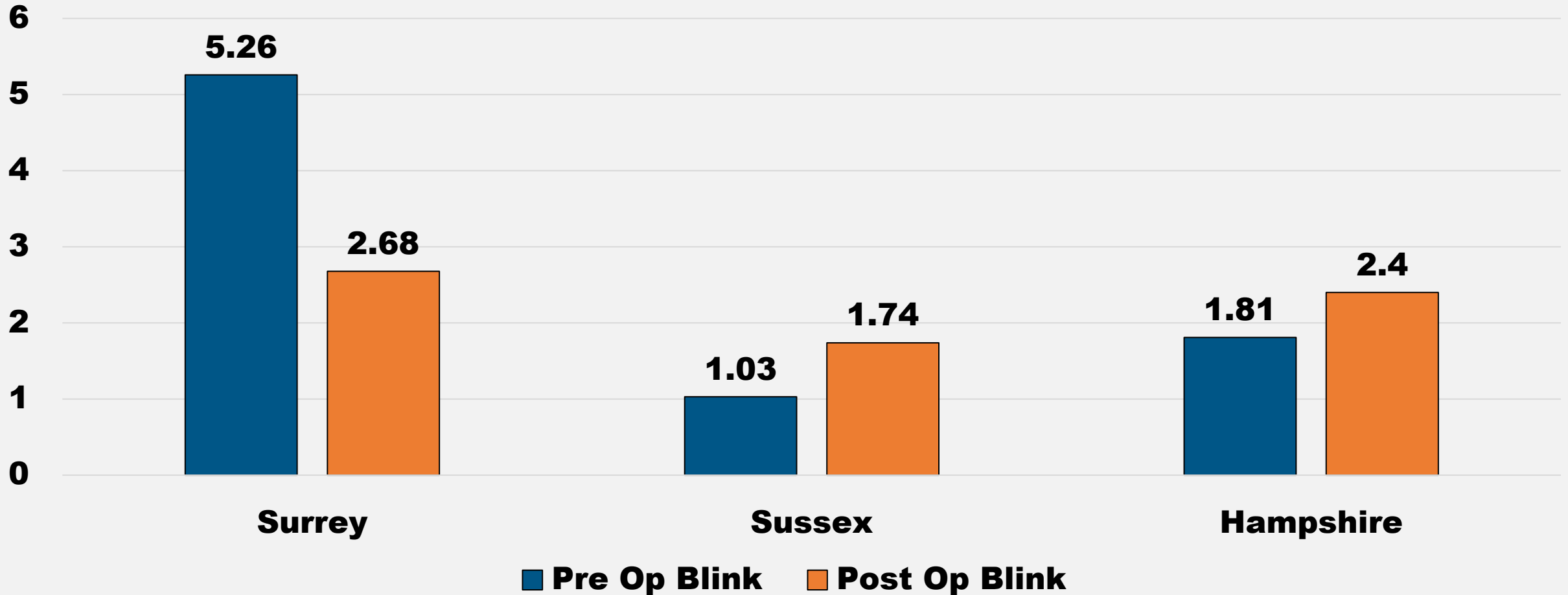
Did it work?

Surrey catalytic converter thefts per day (pre-response vs. 6-months post-response)



Did it work?

**Thefts p/10,000 persons, pre vs. post Operation Blink
(6-month avg. for 15 months before vs. 6 months after)**



Case study examples

- **RHS Wisley fighting back**
- **Tracking thieves to London, followed by covert operation**
- **Working with our regional organised crime team and His Majesty's Revenue & Customs**

Influencing others



Influencing others

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Call 101

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**0800 40 50 40
or Text 61016**



Signs of catalytic converter theft

! Metal thieves operate in this area.

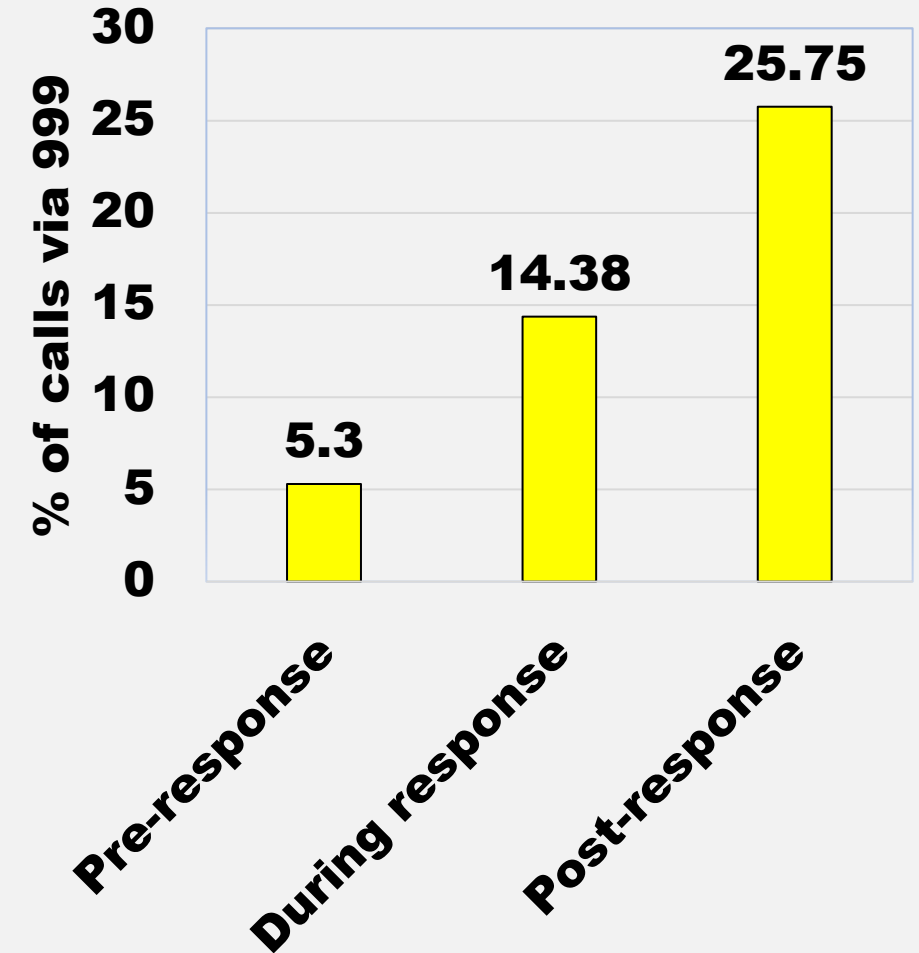
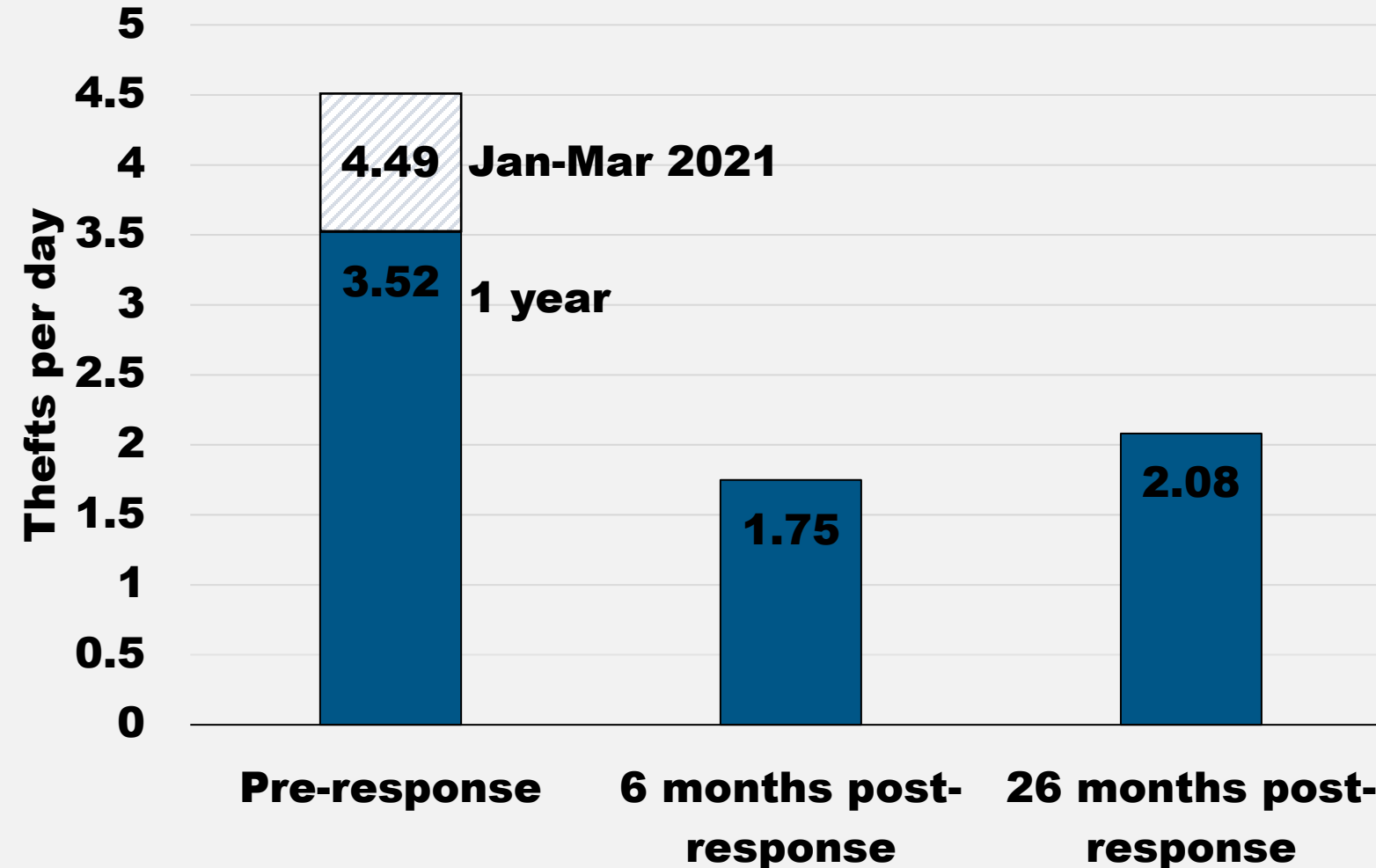


- 1** Spotted someone under a car?
- 2** Heard metal being cut?
- 3** This could be a catalytic converter theft in progress – call 999



Long-term results

Surrey catalytic converter thefts & calls via 999 (up to May 2023)



Was it cost effective?

£485,865 saved in 6 months

£1.71m in 26 months

Forensic marking... worth it?



Key learning

- 1. Data from breakdown services/car dealers/garages**
- 2. A survey to measure awareness**
- 3. The value of data**
- 4. Tailor the learning to your specific problem**



Thank you for listening!

Any questions?

Contact:

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Matt.Sessions@warwickshire.police.uk