

CCTV business viewing events

Sharing CCTV images of suspects with business community groups to increase identifications and facilitate new lines of enquiry.

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23 September 2024

Key details

Does it work?	Untested – new or innovative
Focus	Prevention
Topic	Offender management
Organisation	Metropolitan Police Service
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Region	London
Partners	Business and commerce
Stage of practice	The practice is at a pilot stage.
Start date	February 2020
Scale of initiative	Local

Key details

Target group	Communities Workforce
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Aim

The aim was to support the capacity of regional store guards and detectives to identify suspects from CCTV images by:

- facilitating store guards and security staff to identify known suspects
- carrying out a local data protection impact assessment that considered equality impact

The initial approach targeted crime types linked to business, such as retail theft. However, sharing images of subjects who come to attention of security staff will likely impact on a whole town centre area and can apply to other crime types, for example violence and alcohol-related offences.

Intended outcome

- Increased identification of suspects by non-police colleagues working within the business community.
- New lines of enquiry.

Description

- The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) engaged the London business community via the MPS business crime single point of contact (SPOC) and gained buy-in from them to participate. MPS recruited their staff and briefed on the impact their skills and knowledge could have on solving crimes within business areas.
- MPS set up a London-wide data sharing agreement for all local command areas to sign up via their business teams and districts. This enabled further sharing of local crime images with business communities (never before done in London).
- MPS identified and conducted a Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) Code D viewing (controlled facilitated viewing of suspect images providing chain of evidence if an identification is made). This was done using in-house visual images identification and detections (VIIDO) officers.

- The MPS initial pilot in February 2020 used a dozen colleagues representing the New West End Company (which represents 600 UK retailers) and Lewisham Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP). The pilot generated three identifications.
- A full debrief was conducted with business leaders, who provided positive feedback and were included in the MPS priorities to improve investigative lines of enquiry.
- The intervention is due to be retested in a violent crime space in June 2023. MPS intends to assess its implications in other partner areas – for example, probation, prisons, or schools.

Overall impact

- Initial success via pilot – several identifications were made.
- A small event in February 2020 using around a dozen store guards generated three identifications in one afternoon. Included in this were two officer attachment generated identifications (warranted officers attached to disruptive teams within a business area). They would not usually have time to access the identifications.
- Positive feedback from business partners to be included in crime fighting procedures.
- Wider application to be assessed as part of proactive operations, for example a targeted action to identify suspects for robbery, violent or alcohol-related crime.
- Information-sharing agreement updated to include further business partnerships. This will be managed as part of ongoing engagement by the MPS Business Crime team.

Learning

- Ensure the business SPOC facilitates the initial engagement to get the buy-in. A reasonably senior sponsor is needed to oversee and unblock issues.
- MPS first trialled this in February 2020, but had to suspend during the pandemic. The force has started to renew the work from December 2022.
- MPS recently introduced a new system to manage our information sharing agreements. As such, our information sharing agreement for this work has had to be quality assured again. This has now been signed off and MPS is looking to re-invigorate the process with live events from June 2023.
- A CCTV strategy board can help to consider which other images can be shared more widely. This was done in the MPS and has been the first step in identifying who else images can be shared with to solve offences.

Best available evidence

The [crime reduction toolkit](#) does not currently include an intervention similar to holding CCTV viewing events.

It does include the best-available evidence on [CCTV](#) and on [retail tagging to prevent shop theft](#).

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Tags

Crime reduction CCTV