

Further investigation

Further steps for investigators, including victim care, forensics and working with suspects.

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The investigator allocated to undertake further investigation should do the following.

- Ensure, where appropriate, a crime scene investigator (CSI) attends promptly to maximise forensic opportunities. See [Forensic investigation of the scene](#).
- Take a statement from the victim and any witnesses, if not already completed.
- Accurately identify any offence method or modus operandi (MO), including point and method of entry, style of offence, time of offence (or parameters) and the type of property stolen, or not stolen.
- Ensure an accurate description of all stolen property. This should include as far as possible, photographs, the make, model, serial number and any identifying marks or characteristics – including any remote tracking facilities in mobile devices.
- Conduct house-to-house enquiries in the vicinity to identify potential witnesses, video doorbell and dashcam images, and to alert neighbours and provide crime prevention advice. This activity is known as cocooning. See also [Cocoon watch](#) and our [Neighbourhood crime evidence briefing – Interventions for situational crime prevention](#).
- Prolific or organised criminals may try to avoid detection by parking further away from the scene and walking in. Consider CCTV opportunities for potential routes to and from the scene to identify suspects.
- Obtain images from systems such as CCTV, ANPR and speed cameras. Consider undertaking Police National Database (PND) checks for any facial images for potential matches.
- Review analytical data to identify offences with similar facts or MO, and other links between offences.

Victim care

Victims of a residential burglary may have an increased fear of repeat victimisation and may feel unsafe in their own homes. It's important that forces implement local strategies to assess risk and vulnerability, and prevent repeat victimisation. This should include providing relevant and tailored advice and support to victims. This may include:

- conducting a security risk assessment for the victim with tailored prevention advice
- providing advice on property marking and registration, information about crime report numbers and investigator contact details, and advice about local Neighbourhood Watch schemes
- notifying local police community support officers (PCSOs), who can provide additional advice and reassurance to victims
- completing a victim needs assessment and impact statement and appropriate referrals to partner agencies, for example, victim support

Crimestoppers

Consider promoting the [Crimestoppers](#) telephone number during any proactive burglary operation, or investigation.

Crimestoppers leaflets can be handed out during house-to-house enquiries as a means of encouraging witnesses to provide information who may otherwise be reluctant to speak to the police directly.

Media

Proactive use of the media can help to:

- encourage public support to help identify suspects
- provide public reassurance that the police take burglary seriously and will investigate allegations
- provide reassurance and prevention advice about the prevalence of burglary, and what they can do to reduce their risk of becoming a victim
- encourage public vigilance and crime prevention
- deter offenders from committing crime
- promote good news stories and significant outcomes

Media strategies should include a wide variety of communication methods including social media and community forums, as well as Neighbourhood Watch schemes.

For further information, see APP on:

- [Engagement and communication – Media relations](#)
- [Investigative strategies – Communications strategy](#)

Forensic investigation of the scene

To maximise the recovery of useful forensic material, crime scene preservation advice should be provided to the victim at the earliest opportunity. This is usually during the initial report or initial attendance.

Assessments of the crime scene by a CSI or suitably trained person can increase the likelihood of recovering forensic material that may identify a suspect.

The use of technology may allow scenes to be triaged via the victim's mobile phone before CSI attendance, using a virtual walk through. For example, live stream video link communication systems, and video applications such as GoodSAM.

The following should also be considered.

- All residential burglary scenes are referred to someone suitably trained in the assessment of forensic opportunities at the earliest opportunity to maximise any useful forensic opportunities.
- All scenes should be recorded, where the suspect has caused damage or disruption. BWV can be used to do this. This can help illustrate the emotional impact that the offence has had on the victim and supports the victim impact statement.
- The digital crime scene is examined. For example, has the suspect's mobile phone tried to connect to the victim's (or a neighbour's) broadband router? Contact a digital media investigator for advice.
- A walk through of the crime scene is undertaken with the victim, with appropriate support when required (for example, an interpreter or another person to provide emotional support). This will help to identify the route taken by the suspect. Care should be taken to maintain the integrity of the scene and avoid contamination or destruction of useful forensic material.
- Elimination samples should be taken at the earliest opportunity to improve fast tracking forensic evidence.

Post-scene forensic management and intelligence

Forces should, within the scope of local force SOPs, implement effective processes for prompt and efficient submission of forensic samples recovered at a crime scene. This could include:

- fast tracking of forensic samples or marks recovered from scenes, to support early identification of suspects
- ensuring samples are conveyed promptly to and from forensic service providers
- ensuring that digital images, for example dashcam or video doorbell footage, are uploaded in accordance with local force standard operating procedures (SOPs) to maintain evidential integrity
- gathering forensic material from suspects in custody, including footwear impressions from items worn and recovered from suspects' homes
- scanning for forensic identification markers on suspects' clothes or hands
- ensuring that all appropriate information about forensic preservation is recorded against outstanding vehicles stolen during burglary offences
- ensuring that stolen property is appropriately recorded and identifiable on crime recording systems to enable it to be fast-tracked for forensic analysis when recovered
- considering using a forensic intelligence unit or having dedicated forensic intelligence analysts linking crimes by forensic evidence, in particular footwear and glove marks

Intelligence checks

The following intelligence searches should be considered in all cases.

- MO search to identify suspects or link offences.
- Recent prison releases.
- Offender descriptions.
- Type of property stolen or left behind.
- Local intelligence reports, including stop-checks.
- Police National Computer (PNC), vehicle online descriptive search (VODS), and querying using extended search techniques (QUEST) search facilities.
- Consider international checks, for example [routine police checks](#) and [Prüm](#).
- Check vehicle details or suspect descriptions provided by witnesses.
- Complete a [routine activity analysis](#), as most suspects operate within a statistically determined distance from a known place of residence, leisure or business premises.
- Regional and national intelligence bulletins – for example, [Opal – the national intelligence unit for organised acquisitive crime](#).
- Check post-release tagging (EMS) data to identify the proximity of known offenders to offences.

Covert tactics

Covert human intelligence sources

Forces should consider the proactive recruitment and tasking of covert human intelligence sources (CHIS) for residential burglary offences. This can help to generate intelligence against those suspected of burglary and those suspected of disposing of stolen property.

For further information on using CHIS, investigators should liaise with their dedicated source unit.

Other covert tactics

For advice on the use of relevant covert tactics (such as surveillance) where a suspect is known or unknown when dealing with persistent offenders or repeat offences, investigators should contact their covert management unit to discuss available options.

Tags

Neighbourhood policing Investigation