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BUILDING A SAFE, JUST  
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# The impact of the Reducing Burglary Initiative in the north of England

Dr. Alex Hirschfield

Home Office Online Report 40/04

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# The impact of the Reducing Burglary Initiative in the north of England

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Online Report 40/04

# Contents

Summary	iii
1. Evaluation approach	1
2. Summary and discussion of key impacts	5
3. Effectiveness of interventions	10
4. Key issues around delivery and implementation	15
5. Conclusions and lessons	18
References	20
Appendix	
Table A.1. Characteristics of SDPs	21

## List of figures

Figure 2.1	Average expected and observed counts for the 21 SDPs	5
Figure 2.2	Ratio between SDP and PFA for before and after time periods, and for the quarter prior to inception of the schemes	9

## List of tables

Table 2.1	Northern SDPs: summary outcomes	6
Table 3.1	SDP success ratings	11
Table 3.2	Greatest impact upon burglary	12

# Summary

This report summarises the findings from the Northern Consortium on the Impact of the Reducing Burglary Initiative (RBI). The Northern Consortium was responsible for evaluating projects in the north of England.

The consortium evaluated 21 Strategic Development Projects (SDPs) under Round 1 of the RBI and found that these SDPs varied greatly in their attributes. There was variation in the leadership of the projects along with variation in the demographics and crime problems they were addressing.

The Northern Consortium Evaluation developed several new tools for evaluating crime prevention initiatives including innovative methods for measuring crime displacement and for attributing crime changes to policy interventions.

Using a wide range of data, both qualitative and quantitative the team derived a scoring system for each SDP that allowed ranking of success to occur. Whilst this showed variability in burglary reduction across the group, it shows success is possible, but there are many elements of success, and implementation is a key driver of this. There were also many lessons to be learnt by all crime reduction stakeholders including the Home Office, local authorities, partnerships and evaluation teams from the work carried out, on how to ensure sustainability, cost effectiveness and replicability in the future.

# 1. Evaluation approach

The evaluation of the 21 RBI, Strategic Development Projects in the north of England was carried out by the Northern Consortium. This comprised the Universities of Liverpool, Huddersfield and Hull and Matrix MHA. The latter was a research and consultancy organisation commissioned to undertake a cost-effectiveness analysis of the SDPs. Matrix MHA was engaged both by the Northern and Southern Consortia thereby providing some consistency in the cost-effectiveness methodology.

The Northern Consortium was led by the University of Liverpool and had a team of 12 field workers, each given the responsibility for up to two SDPs plus other thematic responsibilities. The latter were essentially specialisms available within the Consortium that could be applied across the evaluation to support and reinforce the analysis. Thematics defined for the evaluation included Geographical Information Systems, geo-coding and mapping, repeat victimisation, data quality, statistical and mathematical modelling, policy analysis and synergy, displacement, offender targeting and behaviour and cost-effectiveness analysis. The thematics reflected the high level of skill available within the evaluation team.

The evaluation delivered a number of outputs. These included:

- an overarching final report;
- technical appendices (as a separate volume);
- Twenty-one individual SDP outcome evaluation reports; and
- individual case study reports.

Case studies were undertaken in order to cover, in greater depth, some of the issues around measurement and analysis that could not be included in the main evaluation report. Topics covered included the measurement and analysis of victimisation, re-victimisation and crime displacement using disaggregate crime data (focusing on Phase 1 - 27 and Phase 1 - 40 SDPs), an analysis of the use of publicity in crime prevention, and a case study exploring in some depth the cost effectiveness of target-hardening, once again, focused on Liverpool.

The northern SDPs varied not only in their socio-demographic and community characteristics, but also in their organisational structures and partnership arrangements. For example, there were small teams with simple structures as in the Phase 1 - 53 SDP (only five partnership members) and large teams spread across a number of groups and subgroups as in Phase 1 - 45 (a steering group, management team, and co-ordination groups). Just under half of the SDPs (10) were jointly local authority and police-led; nine were led solely by the police and two exclusively by the local authority.

As a group, the northern SDPs also covered a wide range of high crime communities and residential neighbourhoods. Some were poor areas but with strong cohesive communities (e.g. Phase 1 - 53), others contained relatively affluent populations (e.g. Phase 1 - 52, Phase 1 - 61, and Phase 1 - 27 SDPs). Some areas were demonstrably less socially cohesive in that they comprised transient populations, contained problem families and a concentration of offenders. Several (e.g. Phase 1 - 42 and Phase 1 - 45 SDPs) had high student populations. Many had housing problems characterised by poorly maintained, privately rented accommodation, hard-to-let properties and in certain areas (e.g. Phase 1 - 50 and Phase 1 - 51) houses under multiple occupancy. Some were highly accessible to offenders because they had good communications and transport links (Phase 1 - 61, Phase 1 - 42, Phase 1 - 52 SDPs). (See Table A.1 in Appendix for more details).

All of the projects had conducted some form of research during the preparation of their bids, often identifying the most vulnerable victims and the *modus operandi* (MO) of offenders in the SDP areas. The SDPs' analyses of offenders' MOs suggested that entry was most frequently gained via the rear of properties, which was often facilitated by the alleyways to the rear of the houses. Opportunistic burglaries were believed to be commonplace, and in four SDPs sneak-

in burglaries accounted for a substantial proportion of crime. Repeat victimisation was also considered to be a problem across the SDPs, and addressing this issue was a common theme across the 21 SDPs.

Northern SDPs targeted these problems through a plethora of crime reduction interventions. In all, some 179 interventions could be distinguished across the 21 projects with a mean of eight per SDP. In practice, the number ranged from 15 in Phase 1 - 62, to four in Phase 1 - 27 and Phase 1 - 21.

The most common interventions included the use of publicity, the target-hardening of individual properties, the gathering and use of intelligence and offender disruption strategies. Property storage, witness protection and drug rehabilitation projects were among the least common interventions.

Although diverse across a range of criteria, the SDPs were not a scientifically selected representative sample of the full range of residential neighbourhoods and burglary reduction strategies. They reflected the crime problems and area characteristics of the successful bids and in this sense represented a skewed sample. Thus, the extent to which any successful interventions can be rolled out more broadly to high crime communities within the north or nationally is inevitably constrained by the unrepresentative nature of this group of northern SDPs.

Notwithstanding this, the evaluation sought to identify changes in burglary rates within and surrounding the 21 SDP areas and to establish how far these changes were statistically significant taking into account trends occurring in the remainder of the constituent police force areas. Where greater-than-expected reductions in burglary were identified, the extent to which these were likely to be attributable to action taken by the SDPs was assessed. The results from this element of the evaluation are discussed below.

Attributing greater-than-expected burglary reductions to the presence of an SDP initiative would not, of itself, provide sufficient insights into the *mechanisms* through which SDPs impacted upon burglary. Therefore, a series of follow-up questions was identified concerning the likely influence and contribution of a number of factors on the observed outcomes. These explored how far any observed successes in reducing burglary resulted from:

- specific burglary reduction interventions?
- management style?
- contextual factors such as the type of area?
- the nature and timing of publicity?
- the community's involvement?
- the number of partnership agencies?
- the extent of pre-scheme planning?
- the existence of relevant non-SDP projects operating within target areas?

Other considerations also featured. For example the extent to which side effects such as possible displacement and diffusion of benefit occurred as a result of the initiative, the degree to which the schemes were cost-effective and the sustainability and replicability of the schemes.

These questions were examined using data obtained from a variety of sources at different scales of analysis.

Recorded crime data were obtained on domestic burglary for each of the 21 SDPs, their constituent Basic Command Unit areas (BCUs) and police beats and for the BCUs and police beats in the remainder of the Police Force Areas (PFAs). These data were compiled on a monthly basis and covered a period starting two years prior to the start of the RBI through to the end of September 2001. These data were used to identify the *number of burglaries prevented* by each SDP and to measure likely displacement. Individual records on domestic

burglary were also obtained for two of the 21 SDPs to enable micro-level disaggregate crime pattern analysis to be undertaken.

Primary data were collected on project management, partnership working and community involvement through site visits, interviews and documentary research. These data were acquired to inform the process review that explored the quality of project management and the efficiency and effectiveness of project implementation.

Four broad concepts were identified as important in project delivery; these were partnership working, project management, planning and engagement of the community. Each of these four concepts was broken down into a series of indicators. A five-point semantic scoring system was adopted to measure performance on each variable for each SDP. For example, the degree to which SDPs involved the community was scored one (very low) through five (very high). Totalling the overall scores for the four broad concepts created the overall score for quality of delivery. By scoring, in a consistent way, the criteria used in the process review, it was possible to translate these data into variables that could be incorporated in the quantitative analysis of links between interventions and burglary outcomes.

Additional data were gathered on the nature and timing of SDP 'inputs' (e.g. expenditure on victimisation surveys, project planning, meetings, transport, publicity and equipment) and on 'outputs' (e.g. locks and bolts installed, alley-gates fitted) for the cost effectiveness analysis. A key objective of the latter was to identify the full costs of interventions and SDP programmes taking into account matching funding and leverage, the value of contributions in kind, sunk costs and other factors. This would enable cost-benefit ratios to be derived and the cost implications of replicating successful projects elsewhere to be identified.

Once again, these data had more than one use. Although collected primarily for the cost-effectiveness analysis, these data could also be used to map out the *intensity of implementation* on the ground (inputs and outputs by time period) for SDPs individually and across all 21 schemes. Relationships could then be explored between 'policy dosage' as measured by intensity and changes in outcomes (e.g. domestic burglary) over time.

One of the perceived problems in evaluating policy initiatives in deprived areas (although, not all of the SDPs were located in such areas) is that these tend to be intervention-rich environments with an abundance of regeneration and area-based initiatives. This richness and diversity can confound any attempts to attribute successful outcomes (i.e. a significant reduction in burglary) to an intervention or group of interventions that is subject to evaluation (i.e. the SDPs). The extent to which policies operational within SDP target areas were 'relevant' in that they were likely to impact upon SDP intended outcomes, was measured by constructing a *policy synergy index* using data about other policies collected by the field workers. Each non-SDP initiative was scored on a number of criteria including the size of its budget, coterminosity in terms of its period of operation and its geographical overlap with the SDP area, and the extent to which the policy had objectives that were similar to those of the SDP.

Social, demographic and land use profiles were produced for each SDP target area from Population Census data using a methodology developed by members of the evaluation team for profiling areas of high crime (Hirschfield and Bowers, 1997). These data were used as contextual factors and informed both the qualitative and quantitative analysis and modelling.

Quantitative methods applied to these data sets for addressing the key evaluation questions included:

- regression analysis of the contextual and process/delivery variables against burglary outcomes;
- regressions for isolating the impact of individual interventions on crime;
- the specification and testing of multi-level models for relating changes in burglary rates to the timing and intensity of project inputs and outputs;



- the development of innovative measures for measuring displacement and diffusion of benefits.

Finally, cost-effectiveness analysis identified the true costs going into each scheme and the value of burglaries saved in comparison with costs (the cost-benefit ratio) and break-even points (i.e. where savings from burglaries prevented equates with the cost of schemes). The cost-effectiveness results are discussed elsewhere in this report.

## 2. Summary and discussion of key impacts

The method used to identify the number of burglaries prevented or saved that were attributable to the SDPs was based on the assumption that if a scheme had no effect on the burglary rate in an SDP, then the change in the SDP crime rate should be similar to that observed for the police force area. Thus, the question was asked 'how many burglaries would be expected in the SDPs if the crime rate followed the same pattern as elsewhere?' This involved deriving an expected crime rate taking into account trends in the burglary rate for the wider area. The calculation involved the following steps:

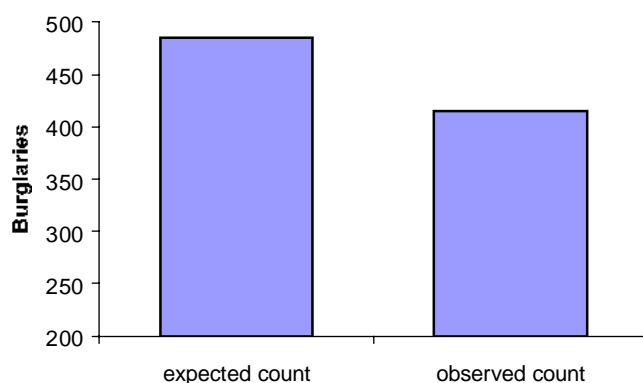
- identification of change in the burglary rate in the PFA by comparing the PFA rate before the inception of the SDP with that after implementation;
- multiplication of PFA change ratio (i.e. the rate before divided by rate after) by the count of crime committed within the SDP in the period that preceded the start of the scheme;
- deduction of expected number of burglaries from the actual count to produce the number of burglaries prevented.

In calculating the reduction for each SDP, the two years before and after the start date of that project were used.

The overall reduction in burglary achieved by the 21 northern SDPs was 24 per cent in the two years after April 1999, compared to a reduction of 14 per cent in England and Wales as a whole. However, when changes over the same period in the police force areas for each SDP are taken into account, the net overall saving in burglaries by the northern SDPs was 12 per cent. The results from this analysis of change net of PFA trends are shown in Figure 2.1. Statistical analysis confirmed that this reduction was significant ( $p < 0.5$ ), indicating that there was an 'SDP effect' on the burglary rate.

The 12 per cent net reduction translated into 1,246 burglaries prevented. The aggregate value of these, in terms of the cost of the burglaries saved, amounted to £2.6 million. Comparing this to modelled input costs of £2.9 million gives an overall cost benefit ratio of 0.89 for the Initiative in the north.

**Figure 2.1: Average expected and observed counts for the 21 SDPs**



Although success was evident for northern SDPs in terms of total net burglaries saved, this concealed a wide range of performance, with just two SDPs clearly failing to achieve any reduction in burglary. Table 2.1 summarises the outcomes achieved by northern SDPs and places confidence limits on the estimates of burglaries saved. Because of the shortness of the time period involved, confidence limits could not be calculated using the variability of the quarterly figures. Rather it was decided to generate confidence limits from a Monte Carlo simulation of net outcomes. The details of this methodology are discussed elsewhere (Johnson, Bowers, Jordan *et al*, 2003).

Of the 21 northern projects:

- fifteen SDPs (71%) had statistically significant reductions in burglary once the PFA trend had been removed;
- three SDPs within this group of fifteen (Phase 1 - 52, Phase 1 - 42, Phase 1 - 39) each had net reductions in burglary of over 30 per cent;
- four SDPs failed to achieve any savings after the PFA trend had been removed – Phase 1 - 45, Phase 1 - 49, Phase 1 - 51 and Phase 1 - 50;
- of this group two SDPs (Phase 1 - 45 and Phase 1 - 49) recorded statistically significant *net increases* in burglary at the 95 per cent confidence level (i.e. they returned a significantly poorer performance than that of their respective PFAs).

In terms of cost-effectiveness, ten SDPs more than broke even on costs (benefits exceeded costs). A further eight had positive benefits, but did not break even. The remaining three had a net increase in burglary resulting in 'negative benefits'.

**Table 2.1: Northern SDPs: summary outcomes**

All outcomes are summarised by two years BEFORE and AFTER START DATE (nearest quarter) of each SDP

SDP	Number of burglaries		Gross outcome	Low	Net outcome	High	Reduction in burglary	
	Before	After					Gross outcome	Net outcome
Phase 1 – 52	881	513	-368	-355	-308	-262	R	R
Phase 1 – 39	753	398	-355	-296	-262	-226	R	R
Phase 1 – 36	664	412	-252	-208	-173	-131	R	R
Phase 1 – 42	325	195	-130	-127	-108	-90	R	R
Phase 1 – 62	329	207	-122	-95	-87	-65	R	R
Phase 1 – 57	599	386	-213	-113	-78	-53	R	R
Phase 1 – 37	316	216	-100	-97	-76	-58	R	R
Phase 1 – 21	526	384	-142	-96	-74	-50	R	R
Phase 1 – 53	405	273	-132	-84	-65	-50	R	R
Phase 1 – 48	367	237	-130	-76	-55	-36	R	R
Phase 1 – 44	457	297	-160	-55	-44	-22	R	R
Phase 1 – 40	420	316	-104	-68	-41	-19	R	R
Phase 1 – 54	323	262	-61	-49	-34	-20	R	R
Phase 1 – 61	459	333	-126	-38	-20	-7	R	R
Phase 1 – 46	190	158	-32	-30	-18	-7	R	R
Phase 1 – 27	556	498	-58	-35	-15	0	R	M

Phase 1 – 35	395	354	-41	-21	0	22	R	M
Phase 1 – 50	248	202	-46	-9	0	13	R	M
Phase 1 – 51	591	452	-139	-19	8	29	R	M
Phase 1 – 49	388	314	-74	0	20	39	R	N
Phase 1 – 45	1303	1221	-82	112	183	250	R	N
<b>All northern SDPs</b>	<b>10,495</b>	<b>7,628</b>	<b>-2,867</b>	<b>1,758</b>	<b>-1,246</b>	<b>-743</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>

\*Net outcome = gross outcomes less police force area trend

\*\*Estimated 95 per cent confidence interval generated by Monte Carlo Simulation

Criteria of success	Explanation	Gross outcome	Net outcome
R	Reduction	Reduction in burglary	High est < zero
M	Marginal	Reduction in burglary	Low est < zero < high est
N	No reduction	No reduction in burglary	Low est > zero

Although positive impacts were identified in terms of the RBI overall and for individual SDPs, this does not rule out the prospect that these were accompanied by some degree of geographical crime displacement, crime switch or by positive spin-offs such as a diffusion of benefit. In the latter, the effects of successful crime prevention schemes are observed to spread into areas or to crime types not subject to interventions and to benefit them accordingly.

Displacement was measured by calculating three values for each SDP. These were: a measure of scheme success; a buffer displacement measure; and a weighted displacement quotient. The success measure quantified the degree to which an SDP was successful or unsuccessful at reducing levels of burglary, and the buffer displacement measure looked for evidence of displacement or diffusion of benefit to the geographical area surrounding the SDP. The weighted displacement quotient was the ratio of these two measures, thereby giving an estimate of whether the change observed in the buffer zone was similar in magnitude to the reduction evident in the burglary rate in the target area (Bowers and Johnson, 2003a).

To investigate whether offenders switched from committing burglaries to committing other types of crime (or whether there was some diffusion of benefit in terms of reductions in other crime types) in the SDP areas, crime data were analysed for a number of different types of crime. Analyses were conducted to determine whether the change in the crime rate was significant. To do this, for each crime type and for each scheme, the percentage change in the crime rate was calculated using data for the before and after implementation periods. These were then compared to percentage changes in other beats within the same PFA as the SDP. Changes were defined as being significant if they exceeded the average change observed across the PFA by around two standard deviations.

Evidence of possible geographical displacement of burglary was found in only five of the 21 SDPs; seven SDPs showed evidence of potential diffusion of benefit to surrounding areas. The diffusion effects were, in general, greater than the displacement effects. What this means is that the size of reductions in the buffer zones tended to be greater than any increases – leading to a form of multiplier effect. Significantly, there was little evidence that diffusion or displacement was associated with particular types of intervention.

The analyses concerned with crime-switch also produced mixed results, suggesting that, overall, this type of displacement was not widespread but did occur in some SDPs. Different SDPs were more at risk of some types of crime-switch than others. For instance, Phase 1 -

39, in particular, showed significant increases in theft of vehicle, robbery and theft from person. In contrast, Phase 1 - 53 appeared to have a particular problem with increases in criminal damage, whereas, Phase 1 - 27 suffered from significant increases in theft from vehicle. On the other hand, beats in the Phase 1 - 21 SDP showed only noticeable *reductions* in other crime types (including robbery, burglary other and theft from person). This suggests that the Phase 1 - 21 SDP caused a diffusion of benefit that led to a reduction in crime types other than burglary in the intervention area.

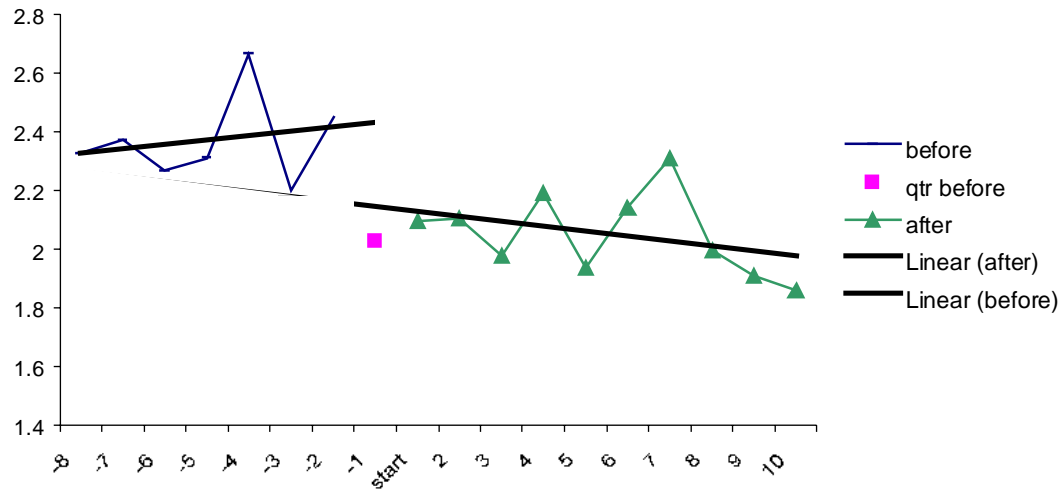
A close examination of change in burglary over time in the SDPs relative to their Police Force Areas revealed a statistically significant fall in burglary before anything happened on the ground in terms of SDP burglary interventions. The ratio of burglary rates in the SDPs relative to those in the PFA remainders by quarter is shown in Figure 2.2. The Y-axis is ratios, (i.e. crime rates in the SDP divided by those in the remainder of the PFAs) and the X-axis, quarterly time points.

The ratio takes into account background trends (i.e. policy effects and seasonal influences on crime) occurring within the PFA remainders. The lower the ratio, the greater the convergence between SDP and PFA burglary rates.

Figure 2.2 shows that SDP burglary rates were, on average, twice those in the PFA remainders. An examination of quarterly changes in these crime rate ratios reveals an upward trend in crime in the historic period prior to SDP action (i.e. in a period up to 8 quarters before the RBI) and a downward trend during implementation. However, across all SDPs, a significant fall in burglary can be observed in the quarter immediately prior to action on the ground (depicted by a square in Figure 2.2). This observed reduction in quarter – one is unlikely to be regression to the mean (i.e. levels of burglary reverting to normal) because the crime ratio in the historic period registered a clear upward trend. A plausible explanation for this is that the fall in burglary in the quarter prior to implementation reflects the impact, on offenders, of pre-scheme publicity – a reduction in anticipation of action or anticipatory benefit. This implies that pre-implementation knowledge of the measures had influenced behaviour (Bowers and Johnson, 2003, Johnson and Bowers, 2003b). Although this appears to be the case, further research is needed to test alternative hypotheses to explain this phenomenon.

If this proves to be the case, the message for crime prevention policy is significant because it implies that just by signalling an intention to take action against crime might of itself be sufficient to make an impact before any resources are committed on the ground. The prospects of using information and, indeed, misinformation in this way may well be an effective crime reduction strategy.

**Figure 2.2: Ratio between SDP and PFA for before and after time periods, and for the quarter prior to the inception of the schemes**



### 3. Effectiveness of interventions

Establishing the key impacts upon burglary of the SDPs generates a useful picture of the success or otherwise of the RBI in achieving its overall target to reduce domestic burglary. However, this analysis does not provide any insights into *how* burglary was reduced and *which* interventions were most effective.

Isolating what worked, how, and in what context, involved the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods. Regression analysis, (a technique to identify factors that predict outcomes), was used to assess which variables had the greatest impact on burglary and, in particular, which were predictive of a significant reduction in burglary.

Multi-level models were used to explore the timing and intensity of intervention inputs (e.g. expenditure) and outputs (e.g. number of window locks fitted) on outcomes. This technique analyses a combination of variation over time (change per quarter) and space (the 21 SDPs) to provide further insight into the mechanisms of change within the scheme areas. Data were available for a variety of variables on a quarterly basis, and these included the following:

- the spend per household (input intensity);
- percentage of the total outputs (i.e. for the entire implementation period); implemented in each quarter (output intensity);
- the amount of publicity used, in terms of the number of different forms of publicity used per quarter;
- the number of partner agencies involved;
- the number of changes in key staff.

Site visits, observation, face-to-face interviews with project managers, partnership agencies and beneficiaries identified good and less than satisfactory practice in project management and the effectiveness of the implementation process. Particular attention was given to:

- the extent to which SDPs stuck to their original objectives and timetables;
- problems encountered, courses of action considered/taken and whether the best course of action appears to have been selected;
- the SDPs' own views of progress;
- monitoring change, including changes to the structure, style and quality of management.

The analysis of burglary change, derivation of the likely number of burglaries prevented for each SDP, together with the scoring of performance on project management and analysis of cost-effectiveness, provided a basis for ranking the 21 SDPs. These factors were used to construct a composite index that enabled the 21 SDPs to be ranked in terms of their efficiency, cost effectiveness and burglary impact (Table 3.1). The top third of SDPs, in this table, could be regarded as 'overall successes', those occupying the middle third were 'partial successes' and those in the lowest third were deemed 'unsuccessful'. The interventions, delivery mechanisms and contextual factors that characterised the most successful schemes were identified through a close inspection of the best performing schemes. Several of these characteristics (albeit not all) also emerged as significant variables in the quantitative analyses.

**Table 3.1: SDP success ratings**

SDP Name	Rank on				Success criterion (see notes below)				
	Net burglary outcomes	Cost benefit ratio	Quality of delivery process	Overall sum of ranks	Net burglary outcomes	Cost benefit ratio	Quality of delivery process	Success score	Overall rating
Phase 1 –21	9	9	4	8	+++	oo	+++	5	Overall success
Phase 1-27	16	16	10	15	oo	---	oo	2	Unsuccessful
Phase 1 –35	17	17	15	19	oo	---	---	1	Unsuccessful
Phase 1 –36	5	3	4	2	+++	+++	+++	6	Overall success
Phase 1 –39	2	1	1	1	+++	+++	+++	6	Overall success
Phase 1 –37	6	10	12	9	+++	oo	oo	4	Partial success
Phase 1 –42	3	6	9	4	+++	+++	oo	5	Overall success
Phase 1 –52	1	2	15	4	+++	+++	---	4	Partial success
Phase 1 –40	12	7	1	6	+++	+++	+++	6	Overall success
Phase 1 –45	21	21	21	21	---	---	---	0	Unsuccessful
Phase 1 –48	8	13	18	13	+++	oo	---	3	Partial success
Phase 1 –57	10	11	17	11	+++	oo	---	3	Partial success
Phase 1 –46	14	12	12	11	+++	oo	oo	4	Partial success
Phase 1 –53	7	4	3	3	+++	+++	+++	6	Overall success
Phase 1 –62	4	5	11	6	+++	+++	oo	5	Overall success
Phase 1 –54	11	8	12	10	+++	oo	oo	4	Partial success
Phase 1 –50	18	18	4	14	oo	---	+++	3	Partial success
Phase 1 –51	19	19	4	15	oo	---	+++	3	Partial success
Phase 1 –61	15	14	20	19	+++	oo	---	3	Partial success
Phase 1 –44	13	14	18	18	+++	oo	---	3	Partial success
Phase 1 –49	20	20	4	17	---	---	+++	2	Unsuccessful

Notes:

Criteria of success

Net outcomes:

+++ Success, significant reduction in burglary at 95% confidence level

oo Marginal, no significant change in burglary

--- Unsuccessful, significant increase in burglary at 95% confidence level

Cost-benefit ratio

Cost benefit ratio = benefits realised over two years/modelled costs

+++ Success, top 7 SDPs

oo Marginal, next 7 SDPs

--- Unsuccessful, bottom 7 SDPs

Quality of delivery

+++ Success, top 7 SDPs

oo Marginal, next 7 SDPs

--- Unsuccessful, bottom 7 SDPs

Quality score = rank of sum of 5 scores below:

Partnership score; project management score; planning score; number of types of publicity; community score



Success score  
Sum of success ratings where success = 2, marginal = 1 and unsuccessful = 0.

Overall rating  
Overall success, success score = 5 or 6

Table 3.2 identifies the interventions, policy delivery factors and contextual variables most associated with significant reductions in burglary across the northern SDPs. Items in bold italics are factors that were significant in affecting burglary through the quantitative analysis. Items in plain text are factors identified as important in the qualitative process review, but not statistically significant when tested quantitatively.

**Table 3.2: Greatest impact upon burglary**

<p><b>Interventions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• location-specific situational crime prevention (e.g. target hardening)</li> <li>• stakeholding interventions with stand-alone publicity campaigns</li> <li>• 100% of planned interventions implemented (none considered implausible)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Delivery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high expenditure per household, high intensity of output</li> <li>• high degree of partnership working, more partner agencies (when agencies are active)</li> <li>• above average expenditure on equipment</li> <li>• below average expenditure on personnel</li> <li>• strong management structures dedicated manager, ring-fenced time</li> <li>• stable management (i.e. few or no changes during the project)</li> <li>• established partnership in place</li> <li>• strong planning, effective community engagement</li> </ul>
<p><b>Context</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• higher levels of owner occupation (affluence)</li> <li>• low rates of migration/ population turnover</li> <li>• fewer flats within housing stock;</li> <li>• fewer males aged between 16 and 24 within the population</li> </ul>

The quantitative analyses showed that the most successful SDPs tended to be those that implemented *location specific situational crime prevention* measures, such as target-hardening of individual properties, included *stakeholding* interventions (e.g. residents' associations, accredited tenants' schemes) that often involved some form of stand alone publicity campaign; and, those that *publicised* the interventions via newspaper articles and/or radio interviews (Hirschfield *at al*, forthcoming). The latter finding reinforced the message to

emerge from the temporal analysis of burglary pointing to a likely 'anticipatory benefit' brought about by pre-scheme publicity.

Another factor strongly associated with success was the intensity with which SDPs implemented their interventions (Bowers, Johnson and Hirschfield, 2003). Specifically, *output intensity*, which measured the degree to which each scheme had been implemented at each time point (e.g. total SDP output within each quarter), rather than the spend per household, was significantly associated with burglary reduction in the multi-level model. This remained the case even when burglary trends in the wider policing area were controlled for. The importance of this measure is that it identifies the actual time period that outputs were fully implemented on the ground (e.g. the fitting of locks, the installation of alley-gates) rather than when equipment was purchased or personnel input was high. Thus, it would appear that across the 21 schemes, reductions in the burglary rates were positively associated with scheme intensity, with reductions in burglary being most apparent when implementation was most intense. Thus, the more intense the activity on the ground, the greater the reduction in burglary. This finding accords with the results of the extensive Safer Cities evaluation that also found strong links between intensity of action and crime reduction (Ekblom *et al*, 1996).

In terms of process variables, it was also apparent that the more successful schemes tended to be those that involved a higher degree of *partnership involvement* and had *more partner agencies*. Indeed, periods when a greater number of agencies were involved in SDPs and when publicity was used coincided with the timing of burglary reductions.

Surprisingly, schemes tended to be more successful in more affluent areas. Indeed SDPs with the greatest net reductions in burglary were distinguished from the other areas by having:

- a smaller share of flats within their housing stock;
- higher levels of owner occupation;
- a smaller proportion of lone parent households;
- fewer males aged between 16 and 24 within the population;
- lower levels of migration/ population turnover.

The reasons for this are unclear, although, the more intractable problems experienced by residents in the most deprived communities, including lower levels of community organisation and cohesion, may have made successful outcomes more difficult to achieve. Significantly the four least successful SDPs were in the most deprived areas.

In contrast, the analyses revealed that there was no apparent relationship between scheme success and a variety of other factors for which an association might have been expected. For instance, neither the agency that led the SDP (e.g. the police, local authority), the number of changes that occurred in salient staff during implementation, nor field workers' assessments of how well the schemes were managed, appeared to be significant in the quantitative analysis.

Importantly, the quantitative analysis also indicated that the presence of other non-SDP interventions did *not affect* the outcome, in terms of net burglary change, in these areas. The lack of a relationship between SDP performance and the number of other non-SDP policy initiatives is apparent when the rank of the SDPs on the presence of other policies is correlated with the three criteria used to measure success. The resultant Spearman's Rank correlation coefficient between number of other (non-SDP) initiatives and burglaries reduced was -.004, that with quality of delivery was -.037 and that with the cost benefit ratio was -.024; all were insignificant. Thus, the confounding effect of other interventions was probably far less of a problem than originally anticipated by the evaluation team.

A number of factors were flagged up as important in the process review or appear to be associated with the more successful SDPs just in terms of being 'common characteristics'. However, these did not all emerge as statistically significant in the regression analyses and modelling. For example, the process review suggested that the most successful SDPs tended

to implement all of their planned interventions, although, despite being tested, this did not emerge as a significant factor in the quantitative analysis. The most successful schemes also spent proportionately more on equipment and less on personnel. This undoubtedly reflects the importance of implementation intensity in reducing burglary (i.e. 'action' rather than 'words') that did emerge as significant quantitatively.

Strong planning, robust management structures, dedicated managers with ring-fenced time and effective community engagement also appear to be important from the process review.

Changes in management personnel created an unstable environment for SDPs, particularly, when project police officers were moved to new posts. However, the quantitative analysis showed that the number of changes in key staff during implementation was not significant. This is likely to reflect the fact that the more successful SDPs, such as Phase 1 - 21, tended to have stronger partnerships, which were more able to assimilate management staff turnover without affecting performance. Thus, unstable management only becomes important to outcomes when there is not an established partnership structure to support the project.

## 4. Key issues around delivery and implementation

The evaluation provided insights into the operation and impact of the SDPs during their main period of implementation. In doing so, it has been possible to identify some of the characteristics associated with strong project management, effective delivery and statistically significant reductions in burglary. The links between these were not always straightforward in that some projects scored highly on project management and partnership working, but failed to impact significantly on burglary. Conversely, others realised significant net reductions in burglary but were not particularly outstanding in terms of delivery. However, these were in the minority and for most SDPs there were identifiable links between reducing burglary and good practice in a number of areas.

Particular attention was paid in the process review to project planning, project structures/partnership working and management and staffing. In terms of project planning, the more successful SDPs were characterised by:

- detailed and thorough analyses of their local burglary problem;
- implementation of all planned interventions within the time scale;
- effective targeting based on identification of crime hot spots, *modus operandi* and temporal analysis of burglaries;
- continuous monitoring of progress and retargeting or refocusing of projects where necessary.

However, it is often instructive to highlight practices associated with less than satisfactory performance so that problems can be avoided in future and partnerships can learn from their experience. A number of characteristics associated with poorly planned SDPs were identified in this evaluation. These included:

- targeting resources on a 'first come first serve' basis rather than according to risk;
- being unclear about targets;
- being too limited or overambitious in the selection of beneficiaries;
- setting unrealistic timetables to implement complex interventions;
- having too many diverse goals that could not be implemented within the limited time available;
- overestimating the level of response from local residents;
- giving no consideration to resources other than bid money;
- lack of clarity in how the interventions were to be implemented.

Some of the less than satisfactory practices in respect of partnership working included:

- poor communication between the partners;
- inability or unwillingness to share accurate and complete data;
- infrequent and irregular meetings;
- apathy and disinterest among partners;
- over-large and unwieldy steering groups.

By contrast, the most successful third of SDPs in the north had a partnership arrangement that contained members with the authority to make decisions. They had also selected partners with the relevant skills to undertake the set tasks and maintained excellent communication links. Those partnerships that met regularly and willingly shared information were able to sustain the commitment and interest of most members. They were also frequently the most effective in project implementation.

Interestingly, several of the more successful SDPs had effective partnership structures that were already in existence prior to the development of the SDP. This provided a firm foundation upon which the SDP could build. Other practices identified among the more

successful SDPs included continuing partnership activity and support throughout the life of the SDP and sustained motivation and enthusiasm of the partners.

The management of the projects varied greatly, ranging from managers being completely dedicated to a project or to the scenario where implementation was just 'slotted in' amongst other jobs whenever possible. Some managers were appointed independently, some were part of the original 'bidding team', and others were only aware of their involvement when 'the bid landed on my desk'. However, in terms of management and staffing there were clear differences between the most and the less successful SDPs. The former tended to have:

- dedicated managers with 'ring-fenced' time (not necessarily on a full time basis);
- enthusiastic and motivated managers;
- well planned and managed personnel changes;
- freedom for managers to use their own initiative;
- provision of training, guidance and support.

In the least successful SDPs, there was often a lack of ring-fenced time for managers, poorly planned and managed personnel changes and, in some cases, the absence of a strategic overview in projects where interventions were managed by different staff or split across several agencies.

Issues of good and less than satisfactory practice could also be identified with respect to the implementation of particular categories of intervention. Target-hardening was the most ubiquitous intervention but was not without its implementation difficulties.

Many SDPs experienced peak periods of intense target-hardening activity followed by lulls; greater intensity was particularly apparent toward the end of the project lifetime due to the earlier unexpected delays. However, the majority experienced delays of at least several months, with some stretching to over 12 months before the needed installation was complete. Slow progress by contractors, poor communication between contractor and SDP, difficulty obtaining permission from absentee landlords for work to proceed, or difficulty arranging appointments with student populations were often cited reasons.

Interestingly, only three projects took into account the time course of repeat victimisation by targeting those burgled properties within 24 hours, or a maximum of 72 hours of an offence. Where necessary, repeat victims would again be offered further measures with which to secure their homes. Several other projects had intended a similar repeat victimisation strategy but were prevented through being unable to identify repeat victims accurately.

Despite good progress in identifying ideal locations for installation and carrying out resident surveys, the alley-gating schemes proved to be one of the situational measures most vulnerable to implementation difficulties. Projects experienced very lengthy delays, although progress was largely hampered by circumstances beyond the control of projects rather than any technical or administrative ineptitude. A series of legal factors and challenges to closing what had been previously designated rights of way proved to be the main stumbling block to efficient implementation. Legal and consultation difficulties proved such a time-consuming and expensive process that three of the original seven planned schemes were simply abandoned by their respective SDPs in favour of redirecting monies into other interventions. The remaining projects did eventually deliver (Phase 1 - 42 and Phase 1 - 40 SDPs), although Phase 1 - 27 SDP had only installed a fraction of the planned gates at the end of the evaluation period with full completion later and Phase 1 - 52 SDP only after the evaluation period had elapsed.

The overwhelming majority of SDPs have successfully carried out education awareness campaigns, with the majority distributing crime prevention literature or security packs to all local residents and/or specifically victims of burglary. Approximately a third of SDPs supplemented this with utilising the mass media (local press articles or radio/TV interviews) in

their publicity campaigns or arranging a community event, through setting up crime prevention stalls selling items or publishing newsletters in which to further publicise the initiative

The implementation of diversionary schemes for projects proved difficult and had mixed results. Progress with attendance levels varied considerably across the projects and for several schemes eligibility criteria were ill defined, such that the very fact of being a young person was sufficient to be deemed 'at risk'. Those projects that lacked specificity in targeting their population tended to merely offer a range of leisure activities deemed sufficient as a medium of engagement with young people, without any explicit emphasis on challenging anti-social and offending behaviours – these were not seen as having a positive impact on burglary levels. Others were felt to be effective, either through reduced incidents of anti-social behaviour being reported or asserting a likely effect after the period of implementation in changed attitudes.

Few projects specifically targeted offenders and these either suffered low take-up rates or never got off the ground. For example, there was a very low throughput for an offender-based scheme with only six offenders participating compared with an original target of 20. Offender-based interventions were very resource intensive, making their delivery unrealistic within relatively small budgets. They were also often slow to implement, required a much longer time period to evaluate and were difficult to relate to positive burglary outcomes. It was difficult to see why they were included in the RBI.

The evaluation also explored the extent to which SDP teams had given thought about the future and their succession strategies. The latter provided an indication of the potential for projects to sustain their achievements into the future. Long-term monitoring of performance and tracking of burglary levels in and around the target areas is necessary to be certain of long-term impacts.

Some indication of the likely sustainability of the SDPs' achievements can be gleaned by looking at the succession arrangements and the nature of known effective interventions. Most SDPs did not have an 'exit strategy' and many have disappeared without setting in place structures that would ensure continuing benefits. However, strong partnerships show a tendency to survive, or at least to transfer skills and benefits to successor schemes. For example, in some SDP areas, the community took on schemes that had initially been run by the police. Examples include a business watch radio scheme in the Phase 1 - 50 SDP and a CCTV initiative in Phase 1 - 36 SDP. In other SDPs, community 'coalitions against crime' were reinforced through the formation of residents' associations and longer-term community networks that may well prove durable (e.g. victim networking and community confidence-building projects in Phase 1 - 37 and in Phase 1 - 62 SDPs).

Another factor indicative of lasting impacts includes the long lifespan of target-hardening equipment. This may last between 10 and 15 years and this, in itself, may help to ensure longer-term impacts *if* it is managed and used properly. Equipment installed in SDPs known to have strong and effective management practices is more likely to achieve sustainable reductions in crime.

Sustaining interventions into the future are also more likely where there is continuity of funding. A third of the northern SDPs managed to secure further funding to continue their interventions. Finally, there was some evidence of a continued downward trend in burglary in the last quarters analysed (that is up until September 2001).

## 5. Conclusions and lessons

The distinguishing characteristic of this evaluation, compared with other more conventional exercises, has been the multifaceted nature of the research approach that has produced a diverse body of data and evidence on the context, the performance and the outcomes of spatially targeted burglary reduction projects. The application, within a single evaluation, of Geographical Information System-based crime pattern analysis, innovative measures of crime displacement and diffusion of benefit alongside multi-level modelling, cost-effectiveness analysis and traditional qualitative interview-based techniques is rare, if not unique. The added value that such a chemistry of evaluative techniques brings is in the ability to cross-reference or 'triangulate' different strands of evidence. This enables a fuller and more comprehensive evaluation of the performance, impact, and costs of policy to be produced.

To make sense of the information, some form of reconciliation or 'triangulation' of the evidence is necessary. This involves bringing the different strands of evidence together so that the likely impacts of the policy and the mechanisms for achieving these impacts can be identified. This is not straightforward. Difficulties arise when one piece of evidence, such as a statistically significant relationship uncovered through a regression analysis, cannot be used to corroborate another, for example, a criterion of project success identified through observation and interviews. When applying the high standard of proof demanded by quantitative analysis, only a limited number of factors can be stated with any confidence to be associated with scheme success.

A relevant issue here is the extent to which one piece of evidence might be used to corroborate another. For example, if burglary falls markedly, what would one expect to see in other processes and/or outcome measures (i.e. what would accompany this if the fall has been 'caused' by the SDP)? If the process evaluation evidence (i.e. an efficient scheme) contradicts the outcome evaluation evidence (i.e. no significant impact on burglary) or vice versa, how would one reconcile this?

A key message from this evaluation is that the pathways to success and those to failure can vary. For example, significant reductions in burglary can be achieved despite an indifferent performance on the policy delivery criteria (as seen in the case of Phase 1 - 62 and Phase 1 - 42 SDPs) or at greater relative cost with a higher quality of delivery (in the case of Phase 1 - 21 SDP). On the other hand, the quality of implementation and delivery can be high but the scheme too costly and unable to achieve a net reduction in burglary. This was the case in Phase 1 - 49 SDP where failure to impact upon burglary was accompanied by a successful performance in terms of the quality of delivery. To a lesser extent this also happened in Phase 1 - 27. In both cases, the outcomes had not lived up to the potential offered by a strong or at least adequate quality of delivery.

There are a number of lessons from this evaluation for different groups of stakeholders involved in burglary reduction initiatives. There are lessons, not only for partnerships and for central government administering crime prevention programmes, but also, for evaluation teams undertaking this research in the future.

For partnerships, good planning is clearly needed, but also, given the results of the analyses, it is very important to make the most of publicity. This does seem to have an impact on crime and can reinforce the effect of situational prevention.

Another message for project managers and partnerships to emerge from the evaluation is to aim for swift and intensive implementation. The most effective SDPs were those that were most active in converting resources into outputs on the ground and delivering crime prevention.

Partnerships also need to be clear about the link between the intervention and the desired outcome, in particular, to map out how the proposed activity will reduce burglary. For some of

the interventions (particularly those on youth diversion and the intensive supervision of offenders) it was difficult to see how they would impact directly upon burglary. It is also important, when planning for and implementing measures to enlist the support of relevant partner agencies and the community. In some SDPs, apathy and a lack of take-up of crime prevention measures by local communities (e.g. the lack of demand shown for free anti-grease paint in Phase 1 - 61 SDP) were major impediments to success.

A number of lessons can be identified for the Home Office and other government agencies overseeing crime prevention programmes such as the RBI. In particular, it is important to assess project proposals on how realistic and achievable they are as well as how innovative. This does not solely mean how realistic is it that the interventions may be implemented but how realistic is it that the interventions will have the desired effect? In other words, is the theory sound and is the partnership likely to be doing the right thing?

There is also a need to ensure project management staff are aware of their obligations and that projects provide what they have promised to evaluators in terms of monitoring information and crime data. Procedures need to be established to ensure that projects comply with their obligations.

One problem that emerged was that several SDPs wanted to know how they were performing during the implementation phase. However, it was unclear how far the evaluation team could share its findings with them or advise them on who to seek advice from. There is need to improve channels of communication between the Home Office, the regional government offices and projects such as the SDPs and, in the process, to establish clear guidelines for dealing with enquiries from project teams and providing feedback.

Lessons can also be identified for evaluation teams. It is particularly important to agree data-sharing protocols, data requirements and to assess thoroughly data quality before evaluations begin. The Northern Consortium spent a lot of time and effort on data acquisition with very mixed results.

There is also a need to produce universal definitions for important concepts (e.g. interventions, districts, BCUs, aggregate/disaggregate data, what is meant by "personnel costs" etc.). A considerable amount of time was spent, during the evaluation period, on developing an intervention classification for all consortia to use. This might have been usefully done before the evaluation started.

The evaluation showed the need to synthesise different types of evidence, although the methods for doing so are not particularly well developed. Further research is needed on how to bring together different types of evidence, particularly, how to reconcile qualitative and quantitative findings when they give conflicting messages.

Whilst it is appropriate to use existing analytical tools where available, it is important not to be afraid of developing new measures/techniques where none exist. One of the important outcomes from this evaluation has been the new measures and techniques that have been developed, both on the quantitative side (e.g. for measuring displacement/diffusion of benefit) and for the qualitative analysis (e.g. the scoring of process issues). These should be useful for future evaluations.



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## Appendix

Table A.1. Characteristics of SDPs

SDP Area	Resident population	Households	Terraced houses	Flats	Households owner occupied	Households council rented	Young males 16-24	Households no car	Persons 18+ no qualifications	Recent migrants	Non-White residents	Lone parent	Student residents
Phase 1 - 48	6,492	2,460	1,964 76.7%	38 1.6%	1,225 49.8%	1,064 43.3%	378 5.8%	1,477 60.1%	4,335 97.6%	537 8.3%	157 2.4%	320 13%	101 1.6%
Phase 1 - 53	6,697	2,639	1,368 48.6%	372 13.3%	1,728 65.5%	681 25.9%	395 5.9%	1,107 42.0%	4,331 91.5%	654 9.8%	35 0.5%	139 5.3%	146 2.2%
Phase 1 - 51	15,544	6,516	2,413 34.1%	4,190 59.3%	3,102 47.6%	1,041 16.0%	1,195 7.7%	4,090 62.8%	10,902 93.2%	2,117 13.6%	422 2.7%	349 5.4%	535 3.4%
Phase 1 - 37	4,338	1,882	1,723 81.9%	279 13.4%	1,296 68.9%	165 8.8%	277 6.4%	1,064 56.5%	3,107 95.8%	588 13.6%	116 2.7%	134 7.1%	71 1.6%
Phase 1 - 57	4,574	1,724	1,150 64.0%	214 12%	344 20%	1,233 71.5%	244 5.3%	1,292 74.9%	3,038 96.9%	558 12.2%	105 2.3%	300 17.4%	45 1.0%
Phase 1 - 40	8,840	3,428	2,290 64.8%	246 7%	2,556 74.6%	324 9.5%	539 6.1%	1,649 48.1%	6,006 94.7%	736 8.3%	37 0.4%	174 5.1%	171 2.2%
Phase 1 - 61	17,101	7,691	2,212 26.3%	4,041 48.1%	5,483 71.3%	162 2.1%	1,227 7.2%	2,379 30.9%	7,286 54.6%	2,768 16.2%	938 5.5%	145 1.9%	1,427 8.3%
Phase 1 - 52	7,062	3,100	1,354 39.0%	959 27.6%	1,547 49.9%	381 12.3%	677 9.6%	1,507 48.6%	4,300 75.7%	1,288 18.2%	1064 15.1%	164 5.3%	672 9.5%
Phase 1 - 27	7,613	3,317	2,896 79.4%	527 14.5%	2,334 70.4%	95 2.9%	614 7.8%	1,489 44.9%	4,612 79.3%	845 10.7%	850 10.8%	160 4.8%	138 7.1%
Phase 1 - 50	4,574	2,328	490 22.0%	908 40.8%	1,249 53.7%	12 0.0%	398 7.6%	1,247 53.6%	4,030 97.3%	1,005 19%	73 1.4%	176 7.6%	128 2.4%
Phase 1 - 35	6,907	3,234	1,583 46.8%	578 17.1%	1,223 37.8%	1,845 57.0%	523 6.9%	1,974 61%	5,092 95%	723 9.5%	153 2%	301 9.3%	142 1.9%
Phase 1 - 39	9,213	3,332	2,059	803	2,003	642	596	1,842	5,849	828	3330	194	282

			56.5%	22.1%	60.1%	19.3%	6.5%	55.3%	94.1%	9.0%	36.2%	5.8%	3.1%
Phase 1 - 42	2063	999	297 25.7%	525 45.4%	436 43.7%	174 17.5%	252 12.2%	509 51.0%	888 64.5%	410 19.9%	352 17.1%	31 3.1%	292 14.2%
Phase 1 - 21	12104	4762	1,239 25.1%	512 10.4%	3,237 68%	1,187 24.9%	733 6.1%	1,845 38.8%	7,764 87.2%	1,280 10.6%	203 1.7%	292 6.1%	562 1.4%
Phase 1 - 36	6690	3189	2,142 66.5%	894 27.9%	1,307 41%	773 24.3%	505 7.6%	2,018 63%	4,710 94.7%	1,112 16.6%	705 10.5%	172 5.4%	86 1.3%
Phase 1 - 46	6149	2058	2,324 94.4%	119 5.0%	1,269 61.7%	110 5.4%	401 6.5%	1,331 64.7%	3,472 97.5%	923 15.0%	2,773 45.1%	189 9.2%	175 2.9%
Phase 1 - 49	8483	3454	1,670 46.1%	855 23.5%	950 27.5%	2,170 62.9%	546 6.4%	2,468 71.4%	6,347 97.8%	844 9.9%	31 0.4%	322 9.3%	190 1.6%
Phase 1 - 45	10167	4111	4,129 89.9%	385 8.4%	2,591 63.1%	374 9.1%	993 9.8%	2,591 63%	6,860 95.6%	1,600 15.7%	2,556 25.1%	281 6.8%	650 6.4%
Phase 1 - 44	10770	4586	1,667 34.9%	2,008 42.1%	1,960 42.8%	1,902 41.5%	670 6.2%	2,819 61.5%	7,614 95.6%	1,189 11.0%	190 1.8%	341 7.4%	197 1.8%
Phase 1 - 62	5980	2427	1,436 56.4%	225 8.8%	1,528 63.0%	725 29.0%	454 7.6%	1,146 47.3%	4,361 95.3%	558 9.3%	43 0.7%	126 5.2%	104 1.8%
Phase 1 - 54	6907	2695	1,373 49.5%	733 26.5%	1,132 42%	1,441 53.5%	442 6.4%	1,501 55.7%	4,573 94%	536 7.8%	51 0.7%	285 10.6%	173 2.5%

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