

Crime Detection and
Prevention Series
Paper 79

Tackling Cross Border Crime

Mike Porter

*Editor: Barry Webb
Home Office
Police Research Group
50 Queen Anne's Gate
London SW1H 9AT*

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Police Research Group: Crime Detection and Prevention Series

The Home Office Police Research Group (PRG) was formed in 1992 to increase the influence of research and development in police policy and practice. The objectives are to sponsor and undertake research and development to improve and strengthen the police service and to identify and disseminate good policing practice.

The Crime Detection and Prevention Series follows on from the Crime Prevention Unit papers, a series which has been published by the Home Office since 1983. The recognition that effective crime strategies will often involve both crime prevention and crime investigation, however, has led to the scope of this series being broadened. This new series will present research material on both crime prevention and crime detection in a way which informs policy and practice throughout the service.

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Foreword

Cross border crime is characterised by an offender crossing a police force boundary to perpetrate a crime or commit an offence in such a way as to require the police to cross boundaries to investigate it.

This report presents the findings of a national study into the extent and nature of such offending and the current police response to it. The research was undertaken in support of the ACPO Working Group on International, National and Inter-force crime which distributed its report earlier this year.

The Police Bill, published on 1 November 1996, set out the Government's proposals to help the police and other law enforcement agencies in the fight against organised crime. The Bill contains measures to place NCIS on a statutory footing outside the Home Office and with a UK-wide remit; and to create a National Crime Squad for England and Wales, bringing together the existing six Regional Crime Squads. The two organisations will be maintained by new statutory bodies which will work closely together to co-ordinate action against crime at inter-force, national and international levels.

This report represents a timely contribution to developments in combating cross border crime. It focuses on inter-force crime, particularly volume crime and suggests a range of measures police forces can adopt better to address this level of offending.

S W BOYS SMITH
Director of Police Policy
Home Office
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Mike Porter
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The author

Mike Porter is a Research Fellow at South Bank University, London, and is seconded as a research consultant to the Police Research Group.

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Executive summary

Cross border crime is characterised by an offender crossing a police force boundary to perpetrate a crime or commit an offence which requires the police to cross boundaries to investigate it. The objective of this work, which was undertaken to support the ACPO Working Group on International National and Inter-force Crime, was to measure the extent of such crime and assess the current police response to it in order that good practice be identified and disseminated.

As no national data on the extent of cross border crime existed three large scale surveys were undertaken involving a total of 39 police forces throughout the United Kingdom. Interviews were conducted with police officers in four forces and with convicted 'travelling' criminals in five prisons in and around London.

The main findings of the research can be grouped into two areas. First, on the extent and nature of cross border crime, we can say that:

- the majority of police forces currently experience significant difficulty in quantifying the extent to which they suffer from cross border crime;
- nationally, 10% of detected crime is cross border in nature and most of this is inter-force, that is, criminals offending in a force which neighbours the one in which they live;
- rates of cross border offending vary dramatically between forces. Forces adjoining or reasonably close to large metropolitan areas and those which attract large numbers of tourists experience rates of cross border offending of up to 23% of all detected crime;
- while crossing police force boundaries to commit crime may reduce the chances of detection, most travelling criminals do so for reasons other than to frustrate police investigation.

Second, with regard to the current police response to cross border crime the research found that:

- measured in numbers of operations conducted, 43% of force squads' operations are directed at cross border crime;
- the demarcation between force squads and RCSs over who should undertake a cross border operation appears unclear in some areas;
- officers do experience difficulties in conducting cross border investigations. These are not insurmountable, and formal co-operation/liaison arrangements can help;
- informal regional groups have arisen, on an ad-hoc basis, to provide intelligence on cross border offenders who do not warrant flagging by NCIS, yet are nonetheless considered worthy of particular attention by forces.

The report contains the following recommendations.

- There is a need for forces to identify the extent and nature of cross border crime in their areas. The Phoenix database, force crime recording systems, local crime analysis, the DNA and fingerprint databases and analysis of informants' and intelligence reports can all assist in this task.
- Where specific problems of cross border offending are identified neighbouring forces should look to establish collaborative arrangements along the lines identified in this report. Regional Tasking and Co-ordination Groups offer the potential to develop such links within existing structures.
- Many cross border detections result from information supplied by informants. The use of informants, especially those close to local drug scenes, and the sharing of information from informants between forces is therefore to be encouraged.
- As NCIS seeks to combat the highest echelons of criminality, informal regional groups have formed to gather and disseminate middle level intelligence. Such initiatives help operational officers address specific targets and take a wider view of crime affecting their areas and should therefore be encouraged.
- Forces should consider formalising the regular sharing of information on known offenders, appointing inter-force liaison officers, setting up short term exchanges and/or secondments of officers and mounting more joint operations. Formal and informal networking opportunities for officers of all ranks should also be developed and exploited to the full.

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1. Introduction

Background

The 1994 ACPO Autumn Conference confirmed the formation of the International, National and Inter-force crime working group with the following Terms of Reference.

- “1. To consider the current extent and nature (and likely future trends) of international, national and inter-force crime affecting the U.K.
2. To consider the current methods of dealing with international, national and inter-force crime and recommend whether there is evidence of any real need for change now, or in the future. In addition, to present options in regards to alternative policies, procedures and structures, in the event of the working group concluding that there is a need for change.”

The working group's final report, 'International, National and Inter-force Crime: A study commissioned by the Association of Chief Police Officers' (ACPO, 1996) was distributed in February 1996.

The Police Research Group's (PRG) contribution to this study involved conducting three large scale surveys and undertaking a series of interviews in order to gather the necessary data on the extent of cross border crime and about policing activity carried out in relation to it. This report presents the findings from this data gathering exercise as well as additional research undertaken by PRG into the motivations of cross border offenders. Whilst the report includes reference to national and international criminality, and the police response to it, its primary focus is the inter-force level - ie between neighbouring forces - and how forces can best address this level of cross border offending.

National and international criminality and organised crime

Whilst the current police response to cross border offending at the national and international level is reported to be effective (ACPO, 1996) it is worth noting current structures and recent developments in this area.

Interpol was established in 1914 to facilitate practical police co-operation at the international level. Its activities are conducted at the request of police agencies of member states and primarily concern serious crimes against the person and cultural property such as art and antiquities, financial crime such as fraud, forgery and money laundering, and drugs crime. It also maintains criminal records of international offenders and co-ordinates international investigations. Interpol remains the principal focus of international police co-operation.

Europol, once established, will provide an organisational focus for European police co-operation and act as the central co-ordinating body for the analysis and exchange

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of criminal intelligence throughout the European Union. The Europol Drugs Unit was established in 1994 as a precursor to the creation of Europol proper. Its initial remit was to aid member states' enforcement agencies in tackling illegal drugs trafficking and associated money laundering. This has now been expanded to include illegal immigration networks, illicit traffic in nuclear and radioactive material and illegal vehicle trafficking.

In relation to international drug crime British law enforcement agencies are served by the Drug Liaison Officer (DLO) network of 50 representatives staffed mostly by officers from H.M. Customs and Excise (HMCE). The National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) funds 10 of these posts which were recently directed to cover other serious criminal intelligence gathering, though the majority of their time is still spent on drug related activity. NCIS also fund three Fiscal Liaison Officers (FLOs) and plan to establish a further three. A service level agreement covers the exchange of information between these NCIS and HMCE structures. ACPO (1996) concluded that UK interests are well served by the investigative channels represented by the organisations and structures noted above.

NCIS' working definition of organised crime is as follows: "Organised crime constitutes any enterprise, or group of persons, engaged in continuing illegal activities which has as its primary purpose the generation of profits, irrespective of national boundaries". NCIS monitor and provide threat assessments of a number of foreign organised crime groups which are believed to operate in the UK. In autumn 1995 they commissioned a pilot project to determine the methodology required to identify organised crime groups and to measure the extent of organised crime in the UK.

The Police Bill, published on 1 November 1996, sets out the Government's proposals to help the police and other law enforcement agencies in the fight against organised crime. The Bill contains measures to place NCIS on a statutory footing outside the Home Office and with a UK-wide remit; and to create a National Crime Squad for England and Wales, bringing together the existing six Regional Crime Squads. The two organisations will be maintained by new statutory bodies which will work closely together to co-ordinate action against crime at the inter-force, national and international levels.

Previous research into cross border crime

A number of studies exist which have examined the incidence of travelling criminals and cross border crime; these are detailed briefly below.

The Cambridge office of H.M. Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) conducted a study into 2,477 reports of burglary in dwellings committed during 1989 within the

policing areas of Norwich, Ipswich, Cambridge, Bedford, Colchester and Guildford covering the police force areas of Norfolk, Suffolk, Bedfordshire, Essex and Surrey. The analysis of offenders found that between 58% and 84% were resident in the county where the offence was committed. The extent of travelling burglars ranged from 7% to 34%, while the origin of the offender was not known in between 2% and 27% of cases. HMIC suggested a number of alternative reasons for these figures:

- i) that travelling burglars are a minority group; or
- ii) that travelling burglars pose extraordinary problems for the police - road networks allow for opportunity, speed of commission and escape, relevant anonymity if they are seen, easier disposal of stolen property; or
- iii) that police are parochial and relatively introspective in their investigations of burglary and only have major success in using local networks to apprehend persons living in their own police area.

Bedfordshire Police examined records of all suspects/offenders during the period 1991, 1992 and up until November 1993. A total of 175,730 crimes were recorded of which 35,042 were detected. 2,334 (6.9%) detected offenders were found to live outside the force area, of which 1,544 (66%) offenders came from adjoining force areas. The force noted that these figures were to be used only as a guide due to possible recording errors.

Parker and Raynor (1995) analysed offences reported to Dyfed-Powys Police during 1993 and information held on the clear up of individual cases. A database containing 13,466 records was constructed from which 9,900 cases were identified as being related to Home Office classified property offences which were thought to be those which criminals would be most likely to travel to commit. Approximately 20% of detections in these cases involved offenders whose address was outside the force area. A further 26% of offenders had travelled some distance within the force area.

A survey of other mainland forces (80% response) conducted by the same research team revealed that over 80% of forces felt that travelling criminals were either a problem (55%) or a major problem (28%). In the main, metropolitan forces did not consider travelling criminals a problem.

Management consultants Price Waterhouse (1995) examined data from 9 forces comprising Avon & Somerset, Cleveland, Dyfed Powys, GMP, Lancashire, Northamptonshire, North Yorkshire, Surrey and West Midlands. Of 6,561 offences made up of wounding, burglary, robbery, theft, theft of motor vehicle, fraud, handling stolen goods, criminal damage, forgery, other offences against the State or public order, and misuse of drugs the percentage of crime committed by travelling criminals ranged from 2.9% (West Midlands) to 26% (North Yorkshire), the average for the group being 10.9%. North Yorkshire, Surrey and Dyfed Powys all experienced

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noticeably higher levels of travelling criminals. An examination of the county of origin of criminals travelling to Surrey and North Yorkshire found no simple picture about where offenders came from.

During the period January to June 1994 Wilmslow Division of Cheshire Constabulary undertook analysis of all detainees to determine the extent of travelling criminals at divisional level. 50.73% of detainees were found to have travelled into the division though no information was available regarding the actual residence of the travelling detainees i.e whether within the boundary of Cheshire Constabulary or not. It was further reported that this figure had been running at over 60% in previous years.

Table 1 overleaf summarises the findings from these previous studies. The key points to emerge are:

- (i) forces experience varying levels of cross border criminality;
- (ii) travelling offenders are more likely to commit property related offences; and,
- (iii) metropolitan forces are targeted less often by travelling criminals than more rural areas, which led the former to conclude that travelling criminals were not a problem for them.

Format of the report

This report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 outlines the methodology employed to obtain the data in this study;
- Section 3 presents data on the extent and nature of cross border crime;
- Section 4 explores the motivations of cross border offenders;
- Section 5 deals with the current police response to cross border crime; and,
- Section 6 sets out the conclusions and recommendations of this report.

Table 1: Summary of previous research into cross border crime

Author and date	Location and offence type	Research findings
HMIC Cambridge 1989	Bedford, Cambridge, Colchester, Guildford, Ipswich & Norwich Burglary	Travelling criminals (TCs) responsible for between 7% and 34% of offences
Bedfordshire Police 1991-1993	Force wide All offences	7% of detected offenders lived outside force area. Two thirds came from neighbouring force area
Cheshire Constabulary 1994	Wilmslow Division All offences	Half of all detainees lived outside the division's boundary
University of Wales 1995	Dyfed-Powys Police Force Home Office classified property offences	20% of detected offenders lived outside force area. Survey of British forces found 80% felt TCs were a problem. Metropolitan forces generally did not think TCs a problem
Price Waterhouse Consultants 1995	Nine forces in England & Wales Burglary, theft, violence, drugs, fraud, forgery & public order offences	TCs responsible for between 3% and 26% of detected offences. Sample average 11%

2. Methodology

In order to gather sufficient data to measure the extent of cross border crime reasonably reliably and assess the current methods of dealing with it, three surveys and a series of interviews were conducted as part of this research.

- Survey of detected crime.
- Survey of serious crime investigations.
- Survey of squads' operations.

All three dealt with crimes detected during the period 1 April 1994 to 31 March 1995.

Survey of detected crime

In trying to measure the extent of detected cross border crime the Phoenix (Police Home Office Enhanced Name Index) database would have been an ideal starting point as it contains a wide range of information including subjects' previous convictions and pending charges. Unfortunately, this system had only recently gone live and could not provide the data needed for this study. A trawl of forces was therefore necessary. 21 forces were identified as being capable of providing the necessary data; five forces, however, declined to participate in the survey which left 16 forces as this part of the study's sample: Bedfordshire, Central Scotland, City of London, Cumbria, Derbyshire, Devon & Cornwall, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Merseyside, Northamptonshire, Northumbria, North Wales, North Yorkshire, Suffolk, Surrey and West Yorkshire. This represents a good spread across the HMIC family of forces index, a system which identifies groups of like sized forces.

Forces were asked to determine the extent to which 'travelling' criminals, ie those living outside their force area, were responsible for all detected offences, classified by Home Office two digit codes, committed in their areas and from where they had travelled to commit those offences. This was done by looking at the addresses of offenders on the crime reporting system. Two forces were not able to provide data on all detected crime. Forces reported a total of 335,313 detected offences; 182,592 were disaggregated into crime type.

It should be noted that this method of measurement will not necessarily capture all detected cross border offending. Certain crime types, such as fraud, may have a cross border dimension but do not require the perpetrator to leave the home force area, and, the theft of a vehicle for export may occur within the thief's home force area thus belying the international aspect of the offence. Drug suppliers may also travel extensively but if detected in their home force area will not be recorded as having committed cross border offences. A foreign national giving a temporary address in the force in which she/he was arrested would of course appear as a 'within force' offender.

The data presented in this survey records detected offences which constituted 26% of notifiable offences in 1994 (Criminal Statistics England and Wales, 1994). If, as seems to be the case, cross border offenders are more difficult to detect then the figures presented in this survey will under represent the extent of the problem.

Survey of serious crime investigations

As it was felt that Senior Investigating Officers (SIOs) could give a good view about the cross border dimension of undetected serious crimes all UK forces were requested to participate in a survey of all crimes of murder, attempted murder, kidnapping, abduction, blackmail and extortion that took place during the financial year 1994/95; 13 were unable to contribute leaving 39 who responded. Information was gathered on the cross border classification, the dates of the investigation, probable motive, whether it was *believed* to form part of a series and whether it was detected. Other data sought included total man hours expended, the cost of the investigation, the number of officers assigned to the case and whether any other force or agency was involved. A total of 1,774 offences were reported of which 1,305 were detected.

Survey of squads' operations

The survey of force central squads' operations, covering the same period, was designed to measure the extent to which forces were committing resources to dealing with cross border crime and to enable comparison with a similar survey conducted by the Regional Crime Squads. In addition to the 16 forces taking part in the detected crime survey, Greater Manchester and West Midlands Police agreed to participate in this survey. Unfortunately, the Metropolitan Police were unable to participate, although their contribution to tackling cross border crime is well recognised. Squads were asked to provide details as to origin, duration, crimes investigated, number of prisoners, property recovered, number of officers involved and whether other forces or agencies were involved operationally. A total of 2,126 operations, classified according to the level of cross border crime they targeted, were reported.

Follow up interviews with squad officers in Bedfordshire, Northumbria, Surrey and the Royal Ulster Constabulary were conducted in order to determine what, if any, problems or difficulties were encountered in undertaking such operations.

Interviews with convicted cross border offenders

Twenty one convicted cross border offenders, selected on the basis that their home address was in a different police force area to the court where they were convicted, were interviewed in prisons in and around London. The offences for which these criminals were currently incarcerated included burglary, car theft, robbery and armed

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robbery, supplying drugs, theft and assault; though most had committed a wide variety of offences. Prisoners were asked about their criminal careers, why they travelled to commit crime, and their opinion as to the effectiveness of the police.

Definitions

The following definitions, which had been agreed by the ACPO Working Group, were employed as the basis for the research.

“Inter-force Crime (IF): Where the crime, or the criminal activity, extend beyond the borders of a force into immediately adjoining forces, i.e. across the common border but not beyond adjoining forces.

National Crime (N): This is crime which extends beyond both the force area in which the individual target resides and the borders of those adjoining forces, but the criminal activity does not extend beyond the borders of the United Kingdom.

International Crime (IN): Those operations where the criminal activity extends beyond the borders of the United Kingdom.

Within Force Crime (WF): This is quite simply operations which do not fall within any of the foregoing criteria.”

Throughout this report table columns headed “O” refer to the “Other” category which comprises offenders resident in H.M.Prisons, of no fixed abode or for whom the home address was recorded as not known.

3. The extent and nature of cross border crime

Detected cross border crime

This section presents findings from the survey of detected crime from force crime recording systems and the survey of serious crime investigations.

Table 2 shows that 90% of detected crime reported to this study was classified as within force. Thus no more than 10% of detected offences reported to this study which occurred during the period 1 April 1994 to 31 March 1995 in the sample of 16 forces was found to be cross border in nature, that is, offenders lived outside the force in which they committed their crimes.

Table 2: Detected cross border crime by force

Force name	Detected crime	WF% #	IF% #	N% #	IN% #	O% #
Bedfordshire	8118	72	4	3	0.1	20
Central Scotland	15827	94	5	0.5	0.01	0
City of London	1523	1	80	19	0.4	0
Cumbria	13809	89	7	0	0	4
Derbyshire	21348	85	13	2	0.01	0
D. & Cornwall	28709	94	1	5	0.01	0
Lancashire	48857	84	7	2	0	7
Lincolnshire	15627	86	8	6	0.01	0
Merseyside	33659	95	3	2	0.02	0
Northants	14128	85	4	5	0.02	6
Northumbria	39147	97	2	1	0.02	0
North Wales	18403	84	3	8	0.3	4
N. Yorkshire	11850	79	17	4	0.09	0
Suffolk	8662	77	16	6	0.05	0
Surrey	4965	79	20	0.5	0.1	0
W. Yorkshire	52204	96	2	1	0.02	0
Total*	335,313	90	5	3	0.04	2

* Excludes City of London. # Where WF = Within Force, IF = Inter-force, N = National, IN = International and O = Other

Table 2 shows, however, that the extent of cross border offending differs widely between forces. Excluding the City of London, it ranges from 3% in Northumbria to 22% in Suffolk. Bedfordshire, City of London, North Yorkshire, Suffolk and Surrey all experienced noticeably higher levels of cross border crime than the sample average of 10%. However, Bedfordshire's records reveal a disproportionately high number of detections in the 'other' category while the high number of people travelling into the City of London on week days compared with the resident population and the force's geographic location within the Metropolitan Police area, and small size, all explain the much higher than average level of cross border crime recorded in this force.

Price Waterhouse's analysis of the county of residence of offenders concluded that "the majority of travelling criminals (whose crimes are detected) come from a neighbouring county and not farther afield. This dispels the notion that the bulk of detected travelling crimes are committed by organised gangs who are prepared to travel considerable distances from their homes." Table 2 supports this conclusion but does show that a significant minority - around one third - of all travelling criminals do not come from a neighbouring county.

Do some forces suffer more than others?

Table 2 shows that metropolitan force areas experience very low rates of cross border offending compared with the sample average. Possible explanations for this are that:

- i) overall such areas offer less attractive opportunities to commit crime, despite pockets of considerable affluence, and thus criminals from other areas see little point in travelling **into** these areas to offend. These areas also contain traditional crime groups based on old neighbourhoods who, via their members and affiliates, are able to establish various levels of control over key criminal markets which would make it difficult for outsiders to establish themselves (Hobbs, 1995);
- ii) metropolitan areas harbour more criminals willing and able to travel 'abroad' to commit crime than non-metropolitan areas. Advanced transport systems, especially the motorway network, may influence such offenders' decision to travel. This view was given by officers from Northumbria and is, to some extent, reinforced by the evidence presented below in table 3;
- iii) provincial forces apprehend more travelling criminals. Surrey, Suffolk and North Yorkshire, which suffer the highest rates of detected inter-force crime were contacted to determine whether these high rates of cross border detections resulted from a strategy of systematically targeting such offenders. All three forces confirmed that no such targeting was undertaken;

iv) if offending is to take place in sparsely populated rural areas then almost of necessity offenders will have to travel. This may well, coincidentally, involve cross-border movement.

There is a commonly held belief within the Police Service that metropolitan areas 'export' crime to more rural surrounding areas. This view is supported by the data in table 3, which shows that provincial forces bordering metropolitan areas on average experience higher rates of inter-force crime than forces which do not adjoin metropolitan areas.

Table 3: Detected inter-force crime by force border type

Forces with metropolitan border		Forces without metropolitan border	
Force name	Inter-force rate %	Force name	Inter-force rate %
Surrey	20	Suffolk	16
North Yorkshire	17	Lincolnshire	8
Derbyshire	13	Central Scotland	5
Cumbria	7	Bedfordshire	4
Lancashire	7	Northamptonshire	4
		North Wales	3
		D. & Cornwall	2
Average inter-force crime rate	13	Average inter-force crime rate	6

The county of residence of detected offenders was examined in respect of North Yorkshire and Surrey. Similar analysis was conducted by Price Waterhouse and their findings are presented in brackets alongside our data.

For crimes committed in North Yorkshire the main counties of residence of offenders from outside the force area were West Yorkshire 885 or 35% (37%), Cleveland 466 or 19% (24%), Humberside 217 or 9% (10%), Northumbria 199 or 8% (n/a), Durham 177 or 7% (n/a) and South Yorkshire 135 or 5% (6%).

In Surrey the main counties of residence of offenders from outside the area were London 671 or 64% (43%), Thames Valley 136 or 13% (15%), Hampshire 118 or 11% (21%) and Sussex 64 or 6% (7%). Surrey Police suggested that the discrepancy between the Price Waterhouse figure for London and ours may be due to the fact that parts of Surrey are actually policed by the Metropolitan Police though they have Surrey addresses. Offenders living in these areas would have been counted by our survey as cross border offenders in relation to Surrey, but not by the Price Waterhouse survey. In addition our survey covered all crime whereas Price Waterhouses' examined only 11 offences.

THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF CROSS BORDER CRIME

Similar analysis of the origin of detected cross border offenders in Suffolk and Lincolnshire found that offenders were residents of metropolitan force areas in 11% and 40% of cases respectively. Moreover, (excluding the City of London) North Wales experienced the highest rate of national offending at 8% and over three quarters of these national offenders were found to have resided in metropolitan force areas. It should however be noted that North Wales and Devon and Cornwall were the only two forces to experience significantly more cross border offending at the national rather than the inter-force level, and that this may reflect the fact that both are popular tourist destinations.

In conclusion, the data from this survey does suggest that metropolitan areas may be seen as crime generators, with many offenders living in these areas committing crime in neighbouring areas and further afield.

Are some crimes more 'cross border' in nature than others?

Table 4 summarises survey returns disaggregated by crime type for the following forces: Bedfordshire, City of London, Derbyshire, Devon and Cornwall, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Northumbria, Suffolk, Surrey and West Yorkshire.

Table 4: Summary of detected crime by crime groups						
Crime group	Detected crime	WF%	IF%	N%	IN%	O
Violence and sexual offences	32156	94	3	2	0.02	1
Burglary	31350	90	6	2.5	0.01	2
Autocrime	29820	90	5	3	0.01	1
Criminal damage	21988	93	3	2	0.02	1
Theft and handling	51720	90	6	3	0.05	1
Fraud	8733	84	7	7	0.07	1
Drugs	6825	92	5	3	0.07	0.3
Total	182,592	91	5	3	0.03	1

Table 4 illustrates that with the exception of fraud offences (fraud by company director, false accounting and other fraud) all groups of crimes demonstrate rates of cross border offending no greater than the whole sample average of around 10%.

ACPO (1996) reports that whilst the overall incidence of fraud has not increased substantially over the last ten years, the scale and complexity of serious fraud is

increasing. The structure of financial markets means fraud offenders do not necessarily have to travel; they can target victims anywhere in the country whilst not leaving home. This would suggest that more serious frauds will invariably have a cross border dimension, which is not fully reflected in table 4.

Analysis of more specific crime types revealed a number which had rates of cross border offending significantly above the sample average of 10%.

- These include unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 13, procurement, abduction, aiding suicide, immigration offences, publishing obscene material, assaulting a police officer, and section 5 public order offences. However, these either occurred very rarely or were reported in this survey by very few forces.
- That absconding custody and driving whilst disqualified involve crossing boundaries more than many other offences may be explained by the fact that they intrinsically involve the offender travelling, though, again, only a few forces reported the latter offence to this study.
- Blackmail and fraud offences are the opposite of the previous group in that they do not necessarily require the criminal to travel but can be perpetrated relatively easily across long distances.
- The only other offences with rates of offending significantly higher than 10% were theft from a meter and theft from the person. The former mostly comprise attacks on public telephones. Barker and Bridgeman (1994) note that in the financial year 1992/3 there were 55,000 attacks on payphone cash compartments, though this was reduced substantially by a Security Enhancement Programme. They reported that such offenders, specially equipped for the task, are believed to operate in highly organised gangs and that "in one instance, a team from Northampton targeting boxes in the South West collected so much coinage that they had to use the Red Star parcel service to get it all home".
- The high rate of cross border thefts from the person could be a result of those who commit this offence feeling that they are too well known to the police in their own area. One of the offenders interviewed in the course of this research, who described himself as "an old fashioned pickpocket", gave this very reason.

Survey of serious crime investigations

The survey of serious crime investigations affords the opportunity first, to gain a clearer picture of the distribution of offences owing to the much higher detection rates than crime generally and secondly, to explore further the impact crossing police force boundaries to offend has on the likelihood of detection.

THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF CROSS BORDER CRIME

Table 5 below presents data gathered under the serious crimes survey from a total of 39 forces throughout the United Kingdom. It shows that 6.5% of detected offences which occurred during the period 1 April 1994 to 31 March 1995 were cross border in nature, that is, the offender lived outside the force in which the crime was committed.

The distribution of offences shows that a smaller proportion of serious cross border offences occur at the inter-force and national level compared to detected crime of all types (table 2), but that a significantly greater proportion of such offences are committed at the international level. This higher rate of offending may be the result of organised criminal gang activity given that 3% of all offences were either known or *believed* to have been connected to organised crime. However, this category is dominated by the offence of abduction which is explained by divorced or estranged parents, or other family relatives, seizing their children and taking them abroad.

Table 5: Detected serious crime by crime type					
Crime Type	No. Detections	WF %	IF %	N %	IN %
Murder	344	95	2	1.5	1
Att. murder	304	97	2	0.5	
Kidnapping	268	93	5	1	0.4
Abduction	134	83	8	2	7
Extortion	19	100			
Blackmail	236	92	4	3	0.4
Total	1305	93.5	3.7	1.6	1.1

As Senior Investigating Officers gave their view about the cross border dimension of all investigations it was possible to compare the detection rate for within-force offences against that for 'cross-border' offences. Table 6 shows these detection rates for each of the separate crime categories. International, national and inter-force crime has been amalgamated to form the 'cross-border' crime data. The results¹ of the first analysis of these data indicates within-force offenders are more likely to be detected than cross border offenders. Subsequent analysis of the data for kidnapping and blackmail showed a similar relationship (tests for murder, attempted murder and extortion were not possible because of small numbers). For abduction however, cross border offences are more likely to be detected than within force offences which

¹ Chi-Square = 22.22 p = 0.00000, 1 d.f.

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indicates a pre-existing relationship between offender and victim. Such crimes will therefore be easier to detect than where the offenders are strangers to their victims. Other serious crimes where offenders are related to their victims are more likely to be 'within force' offences (eg domestic murders). Where offenders travel some distance to commit such offences, it seems more likely that they will be strangers to their victims, although they may know the area in which their victims live quite well - see Davies and Dale (1995) for findings relating to the geographical behaviour of stranger rapists. Table 6 below illustrates these findings.

Crime Type	Within Force	Cross Border
Murder	92%	47%
Attempted murder	71%	72%*
Kidnapping	72%	51%
Abduction	55%	77%
Extortion	79%	0%
Blackmail	76%	47%

Where * = Low number of cases.

It is important to stress that the data from all these surveys, particularly the detected crime survey, are indicative only. The low detection rates for some offences makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions about how far they involve offenders travelling across force boundaries. With that caveat, the data from these surveys suggest that, amongst less serious offences, theft from the person, theft from a meter (public telephone) and fraud offences are generally more likely to be cross border in nature than other crimes. Proportionately fewer serious offences are committed across police force boundaries than crime generally but a significantly higher proportion of serious offences occur at the international level, which may reflect, in part, organised criminal gang activity as well as domestic problems such as children being taken abroad unlawfully by a separated parent. And, with the exception of abduction, serious offences committed by local offenders are more likely to be detected than cross border ones.

4. Interviews with travelling criminals

Discussions with squad officers revealed conflicting views on the motivations for offenders travelling to commit crime. Some felt that more sophisticated offenders were well aware of force boundaries and crossed them to frustrate police investigations of their crimes while others felt they were primarily guided by opportunity or the availability of easier targets so that crossing force borders was incidental. Kock, et al (1996) found, through interviews with five registered police informants, that some offenders are indeed aware of force boundaries and operate across them in order to reduce the likelihood of their crimes being detected.

In order to try and reconcile these conflicting views, interviews were conducted with a sample of 21 convicted cross border offenders in five prisons in and around London in order to gain a better overall understanding of why they travelled to commit crime. The offences for which they were currently serving custodial sentences were possession with intent to supply drugs (4), conspiracy to supply drugs (1), robbery (3), attempted robbery (1), armed robbery (6), burglary (4), fraud (1) and aggravated vehicle taking without consent (1).

Criminal careers

All but two of the sample experienced what may be described as traditional criminal careers in that their offending began between the ages of 10 and 12 initially involving petty theft. From this most then became involved in car theft and burglary/ram raiding in their teenage years. Eight offenders then progressed to robbery, six of whom eventually turned to armed robbery which was the most serious offence encountered. Other offences admitted included assault, GBH, handling stolen goods, social security fraud and prostitution. The vast majority of these interviewees were committed criminals, their language indicated that crime was their 'work' and only two said that after their current sentence they hoped "to go straight". Of the two offenders who did not fit this profile one reported that he did not start offending until the age of 32 when he turned to crime following a personal trauma, while the other had never been involved in crime before agreeing to act as a drugs courier.

Drug use

Four offenders reported that they were regular drug users and that they committed crime at least in part to pay for drugs. A further eleven offenders were addicted to drugs - eight to heroin and three to cocaine/crack - and committed crime primarily to feed their habits. One crack cocaine addict said that his and his partner's habit cost an average of £1,000 a day. Only two of the drug users stated that their drug use began before they started to offend, both were addicted to heroin. Thus although around three quarters of offenders committed what is now recognised as drug related crime, their criminal careers pre-dated their drug use and there is no reason to

suppose that, were they drug free, their criminality would cease, though it might reduce. For further discussion of the drugs-crime link see Parker and Kirby (1996).

Reasons for travelling to offend

When asked why they travelled away from their home areas into the jurisdiction of other forces to commit crime six offenders said in order to target richer areas, four just happened to be in the area and one said to target less security conscious areas. One was offending whilst on town visits from prison, three explained it was the nature of the offence (supplying drugs), while six said that their primary motivation was to reduce the chance of being detected because they were too well known to the police in their own area.

Of this latter group only three said that they were aware of any inter-force communication and co-operation difficulties and that this was why they travelled to offend; they did not offend in their own area. Two of these also believed that their offences would never be linked so if they were caught they would only be charged with one offence. Thus a minority of the sample - around one third - travelled to offend in order to minimise the chances of being detected. In view of the fact that table 2 records absolute minimum levels of cross border offending and that most crimes go undetected, it is clear that by sharing information on known travelling offenders and by co-operating more readily forces could improve their detection rates.

Most interviewees reported that they would not travel significant distances from their home areas and said that 50 to 100 miles was the furthest they would go. This supports the finding that most cross border offending is inter-force or regional rather than national.

Two offenders however, were prepared to travel considerable distances citing a range of up to 250 miles, while one reported that he had offended all over the country. His strategy entailed temporarily moving to an area and committing a small number of well planned robberies before relocating to another part of the country to repeat this pattern. He would do this for up to two months before returning to his home area.

Three offenders specifically targeted rural areas because in their opinion people in the countryside are more trusting and significantly less security conscious than those who reside in urban areas. They also felt that the distances the police had to cover and the smaller number of officers in such areas meant the chance of being caught at the scene was virtually nil.

Getting caught

We asked all the prisoners how they got caught and whether they thought the police were effective at catching people like them. Their responses included leaving incriminating evidence at the scene, being caught at or near the scene, being detected through crime pattern analysis (CPA), Crimestoppers, approaching Customs and Excise for the return of confiscated money suspected of being used to finance the importation of drugs, and being informed upon. Whilst none of the drug using respondents suggested that their drug use contributed directly to their capture all conceded that when the need for drugs was desperate they would take greater risks thus increasing the likelihood of their crime being detected. Discussions revealed that the most common method of detection was being informed upon followed by making “stupid mistakes” such as leaving fingerprints at the scene.

Over half the sample commented on the dramatic rise in the number of prison inmates “going on the rule” in recent years because they were “grasses”. Clearly, then, there is scope for sharing information supplied by informants on cross border criminals between forces, and this should be encouraged. Moreover, given that three quarters of the sample regularly used drugs, recruiting informants close to local drug scenes would be likely to produce valuable information.

Other comments from offenders

Six offenders admitted they had targeted the same premises more than once. A further two said they would not do so but that they might “put someone else on to it”. These respondents all said that when they returned to the same target on the second or even third occasion no additional preventive measures had been taken by the owners. Whilst this sample of respondents is admittedly small it nonetheless indicates the scope for preventing and detecting crime by focusing on repeat victims. For further analysis of reducing repeat victimisation see Anderson et al (1995).

All respondents who had committed acquisitive crime confirmed that they experienced no difficulty whatsoever in selling on the property they had stolen. Goods would be disposed of in the areas in which they resided. If a buyer had not been arranged in advance then it was reported that it never took long to find someone who would want the goods, at the right price. Second hand shops and pubs were cited as good venues for disposing of stolen goods since nobody ever asked any questions about their origin. Neighbouring forces should therefore consider mounting joint operations when targeting suspected handlers, burglars and thieves. For further analysis of this problem see Kock et al (1996).

5. Current police response

Force squad and Regional Crime Squad work

A total of 18 forces responded to the survey of force squads providing details of 2,126 operations. It must be noted here that the data which follows relates only to the number of operations undertaken by force squads and does not show the amount of time squads devote to these operations. Original survey returns were converted to percentages in order to overcome difficulties concerning how forces chose to define the term 'operation'.

Table 7: Summary of force squads' operations

	Drug squad	Fraud squad	Vehicle squad	Other squad	All operations
WF	8%	19.5%	41%	31.5%	57%
IF	22%	14%	34%	30%	17%
N	30%	30%	16%	24%	17%
IN	40%	36.5%	9%	14.5%	9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 7 shows that 43% of all operations conducted during the period 1 April 1994 to 31 March 1995 were directed at cross border crime. International operations accounted for 9% of all squads work and primarily comprised drug and fraud squad activity. National and interforce operations each accounted for 17% of all operations and were undertaken by all squads. Operations with no cross border dimension accounted for 57% of all squad activity.

The survey of force squads also sought data regarding the origin of operations and approximately 1,600 returns (75%) contained this information which is presented in table 8 below.

Table 8: Origin of force squads' operations

Origin of operation	
Squads' own informant	51%
Command units	25%
Force intelligence	5%
RCS	1%
NCIS	1%
Other	17%

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Table 8 clearly demonstrates that in the vast majority (81%) of instances forces rely on their own sources for intelligence for developing their operations.

Drugs squads' operations directed at offences of importing and supplying drugs originated almost exclusively from informants and the gathering of intelligence, in some instances by NCIS. Fraud squad operations arose primarily from complaints and sometimes developed into complex investigations involving sums running into millions of pounds. Operations directed at vehicle theft originated from a variety of sources such as divisions, other forces, informants and intelligence packages, some of which came from NCIS. As with fraud investigations some vehicle squad operations uncovered offences involving considerable sums of money. 'Other' squad operations - for example major crime teams - investigated a range of offences including those undertaken by drug, fraud and vehicle squads as well as burglary, theft and public disorder for example. Many of the cross border operations conducted by force squads developed out of local or other within force investigations. Force squads were found to have undertaken cross border operations involving other forces (23%), RCSs (6%), H.M. Customs and Excise (4%), foreign police forces (5%) and other agencies such as banks and insurance companies (7%). Although other forces might assist with information, this data does show that the majority of cross-border operations undertaken by forces do not actively involve other enforcement agencies.

Regional Crime Squads

Two surveys of all Regional Crime Squads were conducted, by the South East Regional Crime Squad (SERCS) for the ACPO Working Group, to determine the number of operations undertaken within each category of criminality and the amount of officer time involved during the financial year 1994/95. The results of these surveys are presented in table 9 below.

Table 9: Regional Crime Squad operations				
	WF	IF	N	IN
Distribution of operations	44%	19%	23%	14%
Distribution of resources committed (time)	7%	15%	33%	45%

Table 9 shows that the majority of RCS activity is directed at national and international criminality. The majority of operations carried out by SERCS were directed at drugs trafficking and fraud offences which by their nature are likely to involve a cross border dimension. This distribution was reported to be representative of all RCSs.

SERCS also examined the origin of its operations executed during the period July to November 1995 and found that 61% were developed from within the squad, 24% from information supplied by forces and 6% from NCIS.

The data presented in tables 7 and 9 show that overlap exists between the two levels of law enforcement; force squads are, in some instances, proceeding with investigations which could and perhaps should, under their current Terms of Reference, be tackled by the RCS. The question of whether an operation should be undertaken by a force squad or the RCS would be helped by an operational definition of what 'serious' crime is within whose remit. 'Tackling Drugs Together - a strategy for England 1995-1998' recommends that forces, RCSs, HMCE and NCIS set up systems of regular liaison, sharing of intelligence and planning of joint operations. Developments such as this, which will increase contact, co-ordination and co-operation between the separate agencies may, over time, help clarify which part of the service is best placed to undertake a drugs operation.

The shift within RCSs towards directing ever increasing resources and effort (over 75%) at the national and international level of criminality is almost certain to continue following their reorganization into a national crime squad. The clear implication of this is that forces will be left to tackle more cross border crime at the inter-force level.

Difficulties in investigating cross border crime

On the understanding that forces are likely to be responsible for tackling inter-force crime in the future, what are the difficulties associated with investigating such crime and how best can they be overcome?

Documenting the problems surrounding the investigation of major serial crime, Egger (1990) identifies a number of factors relevant to the investigation of cross border crime. He argues that the fundamental problem is the lack of sharing of information and personal networking between law enforcement officers and their agencies. Factors which lead to this situation include the lack of attention and resource allocation being given to inter-agency communication and co-operation, professional rivalries and jealousies. More structural factors include case based investigative assignments within hierarchically designed levels of control, poor information management and the lack of standardised formats for information and data processing and analysis.

In order to identify the difficulties involved in investigating cross border crime a number of interviews were conducted with heads of squads and with investigating officers in four forces. These interviews covered a range of types of operation carried out by different squads. The forces were Surrey, Bedfordshire, Northumbria and the

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Royal Ulster Constabulary. Some common themes reflecting Egger's analysis emerged from the interviews and these are discussed below.

Investigating officers often came across the problem that more senior officers - either their managers as heads of squads or their customers as area commanders - were reluctant to devote resources to the investigation of criminals who largely offended outside their own area. So, for example, an area commander in one metropolitan force with an organised ring of criminals living in his area but who were committing little crime there, was not prepared to utilise divisional detectives to investigate that ring, even though it was believed that they were committing serious crime elsewhere. The gang were not considered serious enough to warrant investigation by the RCS. Cases such as this were encountered in the three mainland forces visited and highlight the difficulty noted earlier regarding what constitutes serious crime and which level of enforcement is best placed to investigate it. Such apparent parochialism is understandable when local councillors and police authorities are holding area commanders and chief constables to account for the rise in crime and fall in detection rates in their areas. It does not, however, assist in investigating cross border crime.

As to the ease of initial contact with other forces there was very much a dichotomy between dealing with those surrounding forces which were contacted regularly and with those further afield where contact was likely to be a rare occurrence. Friends and other acquaintances were of great assistance in facilitating initial contact, not only because they were likely to be more helpful, but because they would represent an informal liaison point with the other force. With so much diversity now in force structure, at both area level and in central squads, officers from a distant force often found it very difficult to make initial contact with an officer who was both prepared and able to assist them with their inquiries. This difficulty in finding the right contact might lead to crucial time elapsing before the appropriate officer is contacted.

Officers seemed generally satisfied with the assistance afforded to them by other forces once the appropriate contact had been found. However, the sort of assistance usually requested amounted to no more than furnishing information on antecedents or perhaps making an arrest if the force was told that the target would be in a particular place at a particular time. We came across very few examples of what could genuinely be termed 'joint operations'. The impression given was that these were fraught with difficulty; incompatibility of communications equipment was mentioned as a particular problem when attempting to conduct joint surveillance operations.

'Turf protection' seemed to be less of a problem than might be imagined; even where a second force had devoted a considerable resource to an operation, it was generally acknowledged that the force which had identified the target initially would be the

one to make the arrest, charge the suspect and take forward the prosecution. We came across only one case - a large drugs seizure - where the second force had tried to insist on retaining the case after the arrests had been made in their area. Generally, this did not seem to be a problem.

Unless their target was worthy of the consideration which would warrant him or her being flagged by NCIS, some sort of 'lead' was essential before any cross border investigation involving another force could commence. Officers were of the opinion that very often, because the individual crimes were considered relatively minor, they would warrant neither attention by the RCS nor flagging on NCIS, and thus series of crimes which occurred across force boundaries would be missed.

ACPO (1996) concurred with this view, reporting a widespread perception amongst officers that a 'void' exists in the collation and dissemination of intelligence about less serious crimes and criminals. This void, which compounds the problems forces face when investigating travelling offenders, seems to arise because NCIS, in responding to the needs of RCSs, appear to be moving towards directing more of their efforts and resources at the very highest echelons of criminality. Force squad officers interviewed felt that NCIS does little to assist them when they deal with criminals who are considered serious in the context of the local communities they affect but do not meet the NCIS definition of a core or current nominal. Thus no-one nationally is addressing what may be termed 'the middle ground' leaving forces to fill the gap.

Good practice in investigating cross border crime

At the level of major and serious crime the role and function of both NCIS and the RCSs are currently undergoing fundamental review. The likely outcome will see the latter re-organised into a National Crime Squad supported by an enhanced intelligence gathering capability in the shape of a reformed NCIS together with additional support from the security services.

Another important development is the Crime Investigation Support Strategy currently being implemented by the National Crime Faculty (NCF). This aims to provide SIOs with properly structured central support accessed through a helpdesk facility. This support, already available to investigators, includes a skills database of all SIOs, an accredited list of offender profiling facilities and expert support from the Forensic Science Service, and the Special Health Service Authority. Further support to the team will be provided through research into specific areas of major crime investigations and the creation and analysis of comprehensive data sets. CPA, now on PNC, is designed to speed the identification of patterns of serious crime across force boundaries. ACPO Working Groups are currently examining what future support will be necessary in order to provide optimum assistance to SIOs.

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Given that the initiatives and resources noted above focus on major and serious crime, what steps can forces take themselves to deal with less serious cross border offenders?

Formal liaison/co-operation arrangements

Regional Tasking and Co-ordinating Groups (RTCG) were established to enable representatives of forces, RCSs, HMCE and NCIS to identify serious criminals within the region and target them by developing an intelligence collection plan. Whilst it is appreciated that this arrangement was put in place to target serious offenders, it nonetheless offers a model for a formal forum wherein forces might tackle less serious cross border offending. This structure may also enable forces to develop a strategic overview in response to inter-force crime.

Examples of formal liaison/co-operation arrangements, somewhat akin to RTCGs, were encountered in two forces. A brief description of each follows.

'*Operation Vela*' is a joint forces intelligence bureau first established by Thames Valley, Surrey and the Metropolitan Police to combat ram raiders travelling around these force areas; most offenders came from Berkshire and Middlesex. It is currently targeting computer thieves.

This structure, which was negotiated through ACPO, is intelligence driven utilizing the 'Infos' database system to track and monitor targets. Officers are employed full time and are thus capable of immediate response. Such a formal arrangement effectively removes all boundaries between the constituent member forces although some difficulties remain over the level of authorisation required for certain activities.

Working relations within the group and with other organisations such as the RCS are reported to be excellent. The benefit of such localised co-operation is perhaps best reflected in the fact that the Metropolitan Police are currently considering setting up similar networks with Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Essex at Wembley Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB) and with Kent and Sussex at Dulwich FIB.

'*Operation Etna*' was first set up in the late 1980s by Bedfordshire Police, to reinvestigate serious gypsy crime, and resulted in the conviction of six suspects for burglary and robbery offences. These inquiries identified family connections extending throughout gypsy sites across Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Northamptonshire and the Thames Valley force areas. These forces now contribute to Operation Etna in order better to tackle gypsy crime in their areas.

Bedfordshire initiated regular group conferences which now take place on average every two months and are hosted on a rotating basis. These meetings gave rise to the formation of the Gypsy Strategy Group, which examines multi-agency approaches to

policing gypsy crime, and in turn to the appointment of a Gypsy Liaison Officer to act as a central point of contact for all interested parties, such as the local authority.

As with Operation Vela this example of formal co-operation results in excellent working relations by effectively removing force boundaries and encouraging the development of contacts and networks amongst officers which in turn improves the collection and dissemination of intelligence.

Both operations demonstrate how forces might work together in different ways to tackle inter-force crime; the first drawing in officers from different forces to act as a single unit, the second concentrating on developing personal contacts in neighbouring forces in order to achieve a common goal.

These operations further show that where cross border offending is crime specific it is relatively easy to set up local arrangements. However, the further afield such offending goes and the less restricted to one type it becomes, then the more difficult it is likely to be to gather information and intelligence about, and consequently, investigate effectively.

Informal liaison/co-operation arrangements

In addition to the formal arrangements, there are examples where more informal structures and networks have evolved in response to cross border problems.

The Burglary Artifice² and Itinerant Conference, based in an Area Intelligence Unit of the Metropolitan Police, brings together members of FIBs and officers from artifice units and burglary squads on a bi-monthly basis. This informal forum enables them to exchange information, share intelligence, discuss latest offences and operations and gain knowledge from specialist invited speakers. Most significant is the opportunity to develop good working relations with representatives of other forces experiencing similar problems.

This conference attracts officers from forces across the South, East Anglia and as far north as Derbyshire. An officer from the latter has recently established a similar forum to cover the Midlands region. Such a spread of informal contacts was said to be especially important given the extent of links between gypsy families in the South and in the North West.

The Metropolitan Link Robbery Squad is a similar grouping of officers from MPD and surrounding forces which meets bi-monthly to discuss latest offences and targets of interest.

² Burglary Artifice involves the offender posing as an official, such as a utilities meter reader, in order to gain entry to premises and distract the occupant.

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The Lorry Loads Conference, set up in 1992 and based at Essex Police, is another example of an informal group of practitioners which meets monthly to exchange information and intelligence. The conference acts as an intelligence bureau tracing loads, linking offences and trying to identify suspects. Whilst there are no restrictions on who may participate, attendance is mostly by officers from southern forces.

Such ad-hoc groupings are reported to work very well. Organisers emphasise that their informal nature is definitely considered important, if not vital, to their success.

It is clear that informal networks amongst officers act as a type of linkage mechanism such that when suspected cross border offences occur officers may contact one another to discuss cases which can then lead to the sharing of information and intelligence about the crimes. These networks therefore serve, in part, to overcome the problem that the service experiences in linking information and intelligence systems in a formal and systematic way.

Whilst such personal networks may work at the regional level, they are less likely to develop at national level because officers' informal networks of contacts are unlikely to extend so far. Yet this could be overcome if forces were to 'regionalise' their networks so that inter-force contacts would effectively, if not directly, cover the whole country. Such networking may be encouraged by inter-force secondments and short term exchanges and attendance at conferences and regional training courses.

National DNA Database

The National DNA database, established in April 1995 by the Forensic Science Service, has proved especially useful in helping to identify and detect cross border crime. Each entry on the database is given a barcode number which is unique. The DNA profile generated from the sample associated with this barcode is stored as a 'string' of numbers. Every new sample loaded on to the database is automatically searched against existing database entries.

Samples are categorised either as criminal justice or crime scene. The former are gathered from suspects arrested for recordable offences (and deleted if not convicted) while the latter category is self explanatory. The vast majority - over 95% - of samples have been obtained from scenes of burglary, theft and criminal damage.

Some 3,857 samples from scenes of crimes had been input as at 26 April 1996 resulting in 1,022 links to another crime, or matches with a criminal justice sample - a 'hit' rate of 26%. 20% of these 'hits' were found to be cross border in nature, hits which would otherwise have remained unidentified.

The National DNA Database therefore provides forces with the facility to successfully identify cross border and series offending. Not only can it be used to aid

detections it may also be used as an intelligence gathering tool through its ability to link series of offences as the following case study illustrates.

DNA samples from five burglaries in three different force areas were linked by the national database. Although these burglaries could then be seen as a linked series, there was no available suspect. Fingerprint bureaux in all three forces were searched, but to no avail. The Divisional Field Intelligence Officer in one of the forces then supplied the name and fingerprints of a potential suspect - an informer whom the force had relocated outside the force area. Fingerprints and DNA taken from the suspect matched those found at the scenes and the offender was arrested (Bridgeman and Taylor-Browne, 1996).

Forces are therefore encouraged to exploit this technology to the full.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

Most crime committed in the United Kingdom is local. Studies such as Bennett and Wright (1984) and Davies and Dale (1995), consistently find that criminals generally operate within a few miles of home. Whilst this study supports such findings it concentrates upon the minority of offenders who travel to commit crime.

This report has focused on two issues in relation to cross border crime - how much is there and what good practice can be recommended in tackling it. Analysis of all detected crime in 16 forces for the period 1 April 1994 to 31 March 1995 found that around 10% was committed by offenders living outside the force area in which their crime was committed, with most travelling between neighbouring forces. Since cross-border crime is more difficult to investigate and detect, it is likely that this figure underestimates the full extent of the problem. Some forces were also found to have more of a problem than others. Those forces adjoining or close to large metropolitan areas and those which attract large numbers of tourists experience rates of cross border offending of up to 23% of all detected crime.

Offenders travelling across force boundaries present the police service with particular difficulties in identifying, investigating and detecting such crime. These difficulties were recognised long ago in relation to major and serious crime with the creation of NCIS, the RCSs and CPA, and these facilities continue to evolve with some significant developments currently underway such as the creation of a national crime squad and the NCF at Bramshill.

As the policing of very serious cross border crime develops, the anxiety amongst forces is that less serious but higher volume cross border crime will be relatively neglected and it is this area of inter-force crime where the need for guidance and good practice to be identified is greatest. On the basis of the findings from this study, the following are identified as recommendations and good practice in developing the policing of cross border crime at the regional level:

- There is a need for forces to identify the extent and nature of the problem in their areas. The Phoenix database, force crime reporting systems, local crime analysis, the DNA and fingerprint databases and analysis of informants' and intelligence reports can all help in this task.
- Where specific cross border problems are identified forces should consider setting up formal co-operation arrangements along the lines contained in this report. Regional Tasking and Co-ordinating Groups also offer a model for establishing such groups or units within existing structures.
- Informal structures have evolved primarily to fill the void in the gathering and dissemination of middle level intelligence. Such initiatives help operational officers address specific targets and take a wider view of crime in their areas. Such groups should be encouraged.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Most cross border detections result from information supplied by informants. The use of informants, especially those close to local drug scenes, and the sharing of information from informants between forces is therefore to be encouraged.
- Forces should consider appointing inter-force liaison officers, setting up short term exchanges and/or secondments of officers and mounting more joint operations. By doing this networking opportunities for officers can be developed and exploited to the full, thus improving the prospects for future co-operation.

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