Public Confidence and Crime Reduction: The Impact of Forensic Property Marking

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What we did
Warwick University evaluated police interventions intended to reduce the burglary of dwellings and improve public satisfaction with policing. The interventions treated 3 areas with commercial property marking (A, B & C), 1 area with West Mercia Police property marking We Don’t Buy Crime (D), and a control site (E). Victims of burglary and their neighbours received property marking kits in all 5 sites.

Findings: Crime
Changes in rates of burglary of dwellings in the 9 months following interventions compared to the previous year average:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Change</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>+33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>-44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>+6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>-11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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In the 9 months following the interventions burglary of dwellings decreased only in 1 of 4 treated areas compared to the rest of Shropshire County.

Findings: Public confidence in policing
3 types of data were collected:

- 1666 local residents
- 9 police
- 4 prolific offenders

Less fear of crime showed a correlation with the distribution of free commercial property marking packs and crime deterrent stickers to local residents:

- 49% of 492 survey comments complained of a lack of police presence
- 11% Less fear of being physically attacked by strangers
- 11% Less fear of having their house broken into and something stolen
- 9% Less fear of being mugged or robbed

Confidence Paradox
Confidence in policing was not associated with low levels of crime or low fear of crime.

House/window alarms, CCTV, dogs, internally beaded windows and even the lay of the land may deter offenders from burglary; none mentioned property marking.
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