

Who engages with the police?

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We wanted to explore who tends to come forward as a witness and who does not – and what impact this might have on the evidence provided.

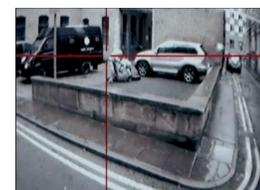
We used an online survey completed by 824 people:

- 583 (71%) in contact with the police (reporters)
- 241 (29%) not in contact (non-reporters)



Reasons for not reporting

- 15% - Didn't think the crime was serious enough
- 12% - Didn't get a really good look at what happened
- 11% - Did not want to be involved with the police
- 11% - Worried the perpetrator might threaten them
- 9% - Felt nervous about contacting the police
- 6% - Did not want to have to go to court
- 5% - Knew the perpetrator, didn't want to get them in trouble
- 4% - Worried neighbours would find out they had contacted the police
- 27% - Other reasons e.g.
 - Other people would have been better witnesses
 - Didn't think the police would care or could help
 - Distrust of the police



Compared to reporters, non-reporters tended to be:

- Younger, more non-Caucasian ethnicities, more men
- More likely to see themselves as a below average witness
- More likely to have a bad opinion of the police
- More likely to have seen a theft or drug offence
- Thought others would be a better witness
- Worried (>35%) about the consequences of reporting



Impact on ID evidence

When attending an ID procedure, a significant (approx. 25-35%) number of reporters believe the perpetrator will be present, believe they are an above average witness, don't seem to heed the 'may or may not' instruction and see themselves as doing their job as an upstanding citizen.

It is likely that witnesses who come forward are more likely to want to help the police, more likely to want to choose someone at an ID procedure, and are more likely to make a misidentification than are those that do not come forward.

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