



TILLEY AWARDS 2011 APPLICATION FORM

Applications made to this year's Tilley Awards must be submitted electronically to the Tilley Awards mailbox at TilleyAwards2011@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

All sections of the application form must be completed.

Please **ensure that you have read the guidance before completing this form**. Guidance is available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/partnerships/tilley-awards/tilley-awards-11/

By submitting an application to the awards, entrants are agreeing to abide by the conditions set out in the guidance. Failure to adhere to the requirements set out in the 2011 Awards Guidance will result in your entry being rejected from the competition.

All entries for phase one themes must be received by 1:00pm on 13 June 2011. Late entries will not be accepted. Hard copies of the application form are not required.

All entries for phase two themes must be received by 1:00pm on 5 September. Late entries will not be accepted. Hard copies of the application form are not required.

Any queries on the application process should be directed to Darren Kristiansen who can be reached on 0207 035 3228.

Project Name: Operation Bluestone

Location: Bristol – Avon and Somerset Police

Theme Addressed: Theme 2; Violence against women and girls

PART ONE – PROJECT SUMMARY

Information contained within this section is not assessed as part of identifying this year's national finalists and overall top three entries received in the 2011 Tilley Awards. The information contained within this section will, however, be used to identify the most popular national finalist entered into this year's awards.

This section should be used to describe your project in **no more than 400 words**. Advice about how to complete this section is contained within the 2011 Tilley Awards guidance. This section should be used as your social marketing opportunity.

FOUR HUNDRED WORDS SUMMARY

Operation Bluestone is Bristol's specialist rape investigation team. It was formed in September 2009 in response to the poor detection rate for rape and the high victim declines to prosecute rate (VDTP) in the city.

The team are now responsible for all victim based contact, offering each victim tailored support and advice. But Bluestone goes beyond just the need to detect crime and reduce victim disengagement. It plays an active role in the prevention of offences and also encourages reporting within groups such as sex-workers and black ethnic minority (BME) communities who traditionally under-reported.

Bluestone is cost neutral, utilising existing district resources and officers who volunteered for the role. The team consists of:

- one Detective Inspector
- three Detective Sergeants
- twelve Detective Constables
- nine specialist Sexual Abuse Investigation Team Police Constables

Partnership working

Bluestone's success can be partly attributed to having formed strong collaborative working relationships with external organisations, such as The Sexual Abuse Referral Centre (SARC), Independent Sexual Violence Advisors, The One25 Project (Supporting local sex workers), Bristol Drugs Project, Safer Bristol and the Crown Prosecution Service.

Prevention

Successful investigations are directly linked to prevention of future offences. We can evidence several operations where forensic leads have been utilised to link stranger rapes and identify suspects far earlier which has prevented escalation of offending. General prevention activity remains part of day-to-day business, with Bluestone playing a leading role in the local delivery of preventative advice within Bristol, to schools and local community groups.

Demonstrating our success

During the first year Bluestone was operational the detection rate increased by 25%, whilst the VDTP rate decreased by 38%.

Our success can also be measured by considering the impact we have had on the lives of victims. For example we have maintained a good relationship with one victim,

a sex worker, the victim of a violent sexual attack resulting in a serious facial injury. She now receives her first benefit payments in ten years, has been supported through hospital and dentistry treatment, has moved into her own accommodation and is receiving support for her alcohol dependency. This holistic approach is changing lives.

Bluestone's success has already been recognised both at a local and national level. This includes a feature item on Sky News¹ and an invitation to present the team as best practice at the 9th Tackling Sexual Violence Conference in London in December.

¹ Link to the Sky News coverage of Bluestone
<http://news.sky.com/skynews/Article/201005115631625?chooseNews=stories>

PART TWO - EVIDENCE

Information contained within this section of the application form is assessed for the Tilley Awards.

Describe the project in **no more than 4,000 words**. Full details on how to complete this section of the application form is contained within the 2010 Tilley Awards Guidance.

SCANNING

The national problem

Throughout England and Wales rape and sexual violence has long been a subject of media and public interest.

Low detection rates² by police investigations and poor conviction rates at court have been often reported in the media and public confidence in the criminal justice system gaining a positive result for victims is understandably low as a result.

Quantifying the problem in Bristol

In the years before Bluestone was formed Bristol was under-performing in terms of rape and sexual assault detection and conviction rates when compared against other forces, despite the fact that figures were low nationally.

Low detection rates, low conviction rates, low confidence

In the financial year 2006/07 the rape detection rate in Bristol was just 21.0% which significantly contributed to the entire force receiving a national rating of poor.

In 2007/08 the rape detection rate increased to 25.3% following the introduction of the Sexual Assault Investigation Team (SAIT) in May 2006 but clearly there was significant room for improvement.

Below an article in the Bristol Evening Post discusses the low rape conviction rate in Bristol:

“Avon and Somerset Constabulary was blasted last year for one of the lowest rape conviction rates in the country, and recent statistics for Bristol show only a minuscule improvement.

The rape conviction rates for 2006 (the latest detailed figures available) were obtained by national equality body the Fawcett Society after a Freedom of Information request.

They showed rape conviction rates had fallen in 18 out of 24 police forces, to an average of 6.1 per cent across England and Wales. But the figure for Avon and Somerset was just 4.2 per cent.

More recent statistics for Bristol alone show the situation is barely any better. Just under 700 sexual offences were reported in Bristol in 2006/7, according to figures

² The detection rate relates to the percentage of persons who are charged as a percentage of rape allegations made

presented to the Safer Bristol Partnership's rape and sexual assault strategic group.

But only 16 per cent of rape cases in Bristol ever make it to court and, of these, only five per cent are likely to result in conviction.”

The Bristol Evening Post 11 March 2009

Considering all of the above it is unsurprising that confidence in the police was low and the average Victim Declines To Prosecute Rate (VDTP) in Bristol was very high at **34.7%**.³

³ The VDTP rate relates to the attrition rate of victims who initially report an offence of rape to police, but who then choose to withdraw from the criminal justice system.

ANALYSIS

Over half of all instances of rape and sexual violence committed within Avon and Somerset are recorded in Bristol.

The low detection rate of 24.5% for the city and the low conviction rate (seen below) contributed to making Avon and Somerset significantly below the national average in gaining justice for victims.

A table showing % rape convictions by comparable Police Force Area: 2006 – 2007⁴

Police Force Area	Conviction Rate 2006 (%)	Conviction Rate 2007 (%)	Difference 2006/2007 (%)
Average for England and Wales	6.1	7.0	0.9
Avon and Somerset	4.2	5.2	1.0
Cambridgeshire	3.2	3.1	-0.1
Devon and Cornwall	5.2	5.6	0.4
Essex	4.0	3.1	-0.9
Hampshire	4.8	4.5	-0.3
Hertfordshire	4.4	6.5	2.1
Kent	5.5	6.6	1.1
Thames Valley	5.3	6.5	1.2

Lack of victim confidence

In the year proceeding Bluestone's formation over a third of all victims reporting rape or sexual assault declined to assist the police with the investigation.

The natural conclusion was that Bristol and subsequently Avon and Somerset Police were underperforming in their investigation of rape and serious sexual assault.

There are a number of statistical tests that can be used to measure police performance in relation to the investigation of rape:

- The overall rape reporting rate to police
- The overall conviction rate
- **Police detection rate**
- **Victim declines to prosecute rate (VDTP)**

The first two tests would be difficult measures of the success of intervention so we chose to focus upon the latter two.

The detection rate is a direct measure of police investigative success, whilst the VDTP rate is a direct measure of the confidence of a victim to engage with the police and proceed through the criminal justice system. Therefore, both measures can be directly affected by police intervention and provide the best test of its effectiveness.

⁴ Taken from a larger table showing all forces on the Fawcett Society website
:www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/documents/Regional%20Rape%20Conviction%20Rates%202007(1).pdf

Investigations

Prior to 21 September 2009 all rapes in Bristol involving a victim over the age 14 were investigated by the Serious & Major Crime Office (SMC) in conjunction with officers from the Sexual Abuse Investigation Team (SAIT). As well as being responsible for all rapes the SMC investigated a wide range of other offences.

The SMC incorporated six teams who worked a shift rota. Work was allocated to each team depending on which team was on duty at the time of the reported offence or the following morning. When a rape was reported it was allocated to the duty team and to the least busy officer on that team, irrespective of the skill set of that individual.

This meant that inexperienced trainee detectives with lower workloads were most likely to be allocated a rape case to gain experience.

SAIT officers were stationed at a different location to the investigative team and had little face-to-face contact with them. This led to the two sides of the investigative team working separately from each other, creating confusion for both the investigators and the victim.

Due to the low detection rate, low conviction rate and high VDTP, there was a culture within SMC of “dodging” rape investigations. Illustrated by quotes from DC’s at the time:

“What’s the point, the victim will only retract anyway”

“There’s no evidence to support the victim”

“CPS won’t prosecute anyway”

“He’ll only get off at court”

Also senior supervision of investigations was conducted by one of three Detective Inspectors. This created a shifting investigative strategy and led to inconsistent policy decisions.

Internal communication

Rape investigations are often reliant on forensic evidence and policy dictates that a crime scene manager (CSM) should be consulted in every investigation. CSMs were also stationed at a different location to SMC, this often led to consultations being conducted over the telephone, not in person, leading to confusion and missed investigative opportunities.

Intelligence officers were stationed at a different location, leading to poor internal communication and a failure to maximise opportunities to identify offenders. Furthermore, the lack of intelligence back-up led to missed opportunities in establishing crime patterns, hotspots and prevention of further offences.

Processes

All rape charging decisions are subject to authorisation by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). Prior to Bluestone any decision to charge was sought by the officer in charge (OIC) from one of ten duty prosecutors. Expectations as to what constituted

sufficient evidence to charge were often unknown to the OIC and differed between CPS advisors.

Due to the relationship between the police and CPS the treatment of victims was often inconsistent. This often meant that victims were not kept abreast of case developments, leading to feelings of exclusion.

Relationships with support agencies were managed by the OIC/SAIT officer on a case-by-case basis. There was no unified system of offering support to victims and ensuring a consistent approach to all investigations. Support referrals were therefore low and staff were unsure as to the availability of suitable support agencies for different victims.

Fear of reporting

Discussion with rape support agencies indicated that there were a number of factors directly linked to the administration of an investigation which had a negative affect on the victim, these included:

- The attitude of the OIC towards the victim
- A failure to keep the victim updated of the investigation
- A failure to explain what the expectation of the victim would be

Causes of the problems:

In summary, the analysis indicates the following factors as causes:

Poor detection rate

- inexperienced investigators
- unmotivated investigators
- lack of communication within the investigative team
- inconsistent supervision of rapes
- lack of evidence/Failure to maximise evidential opportunities (*Victim ABE & CSI*)
- poor relationship with CPS
- lack of common approach with the CPS

High VDTP for rape cases

- poor victim treatment at court
- fear of reporting to police
- lack of support

RESPONSE

The Bristol response to the problems identified was the creation of Operation Bluestone. A specialist unit developed to investigate all cases of rape and serious sexual assault in Bristol.

At the commencement of Bluestone a mission statement was prepared by D/Supt Sarah Crew, head of Bristol CID:

“If we are truly to make our communities safer from the perpetrators of rape and serious sexual assault, five elements need to be in place. There must be:

- Greater public awareness of what is acceptable in sexual relationships and what rape is – everyone must understand that when it comes to consent, no means no.
- Trust and confidence in the services available sufficient for people to come forward and seek help when they have been raped.
- Excellent victim centred care, support and advocacy services that help victims get over their trauma – immediately and in the days, weeks and months that follow.
- Specialist, committed and dedicated Police Officers who will pursue the perpetrators with comprehensive, open minded and ethical investigations.
- Prosecutions and trials that see the Police, CPS and the care givers working together in support of the victim – so that she or he can present their case in a clear and compelling way and see justice done.

The five elements have been a guiding principle and are incorporated all aspects of the work which Bluestone complete.

STAFFING

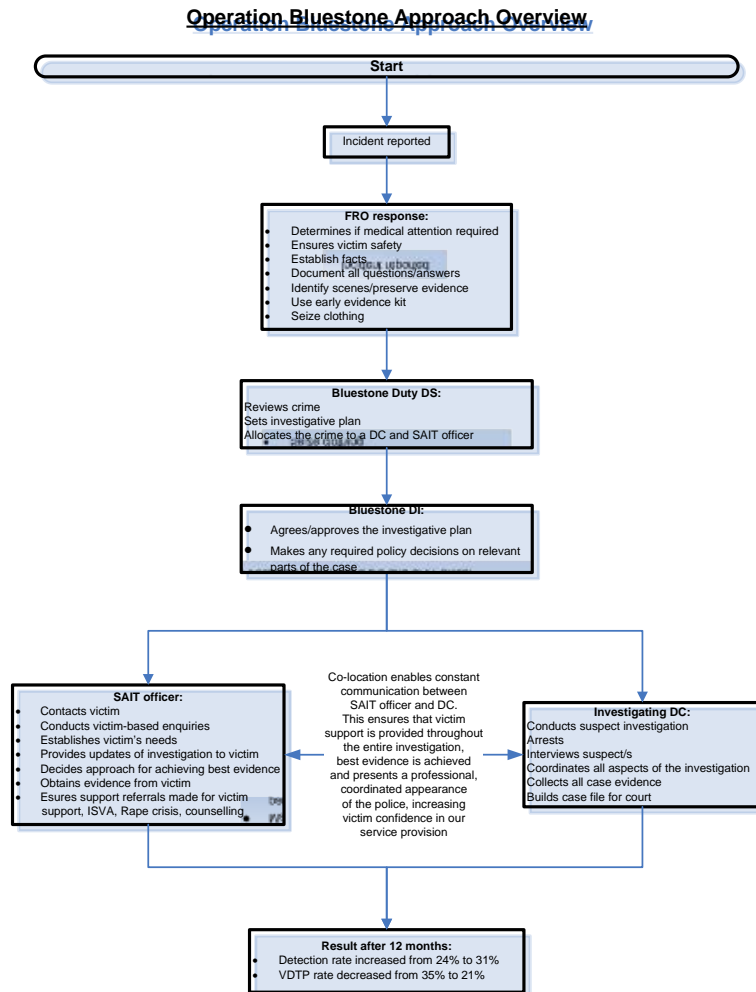
Part of the challenge facing the district was addressing the issues without the use of any additional resources. Any response had to be cost neutral.

Bluestone was formed using existing district resources. All Detective officers were seconded from the SMC office and were all experienced in managing and investigating rape cases. Importantly the officers were all volunteers, who had successfully progressed through an application process. This enabled the most appropriate staff to be selected.

SAIT officers were drawn from the existing SAIT team.

COMMAND STRUCTURE

The following chart illustrates the command structure for BLUESTONE:



From the initial reporting to a first responding officer (FRO) to the allocation to the OIC, the whole investigative process is streamlined.

The ongoing investigation is managed as part of a joint team approach by the Bluestone Investigating DC and by a SAIT Officer. The former conducts the suspect investigation making arrests, conducting suspect interviews, collecting all case evidence and building the case file for court. SAIT Officer intervention is intrinsically linked to the reduction in victim attrition rates.

The co-location of SAIT Officers within the Bluestone Office enables constant and consistent communication with the Investigating DC. This presents a professional and coordinated Police response to the investigation, one which provides victim support, achieves best evidence and increases victim confidence in service provision.

Specialist skills

Effective interviewing is critical to securing prosecutions and reduces attrition. All Bluestone Detectives are Tier 2 / PIP Level2 trained. In addition, one Bluestone officer is trained to Tier 3 level (advanced interviewer). All SAIT Officers are specially

trained to interview victims of sexual assault. They receive specific training which incorporates undertaking video recording interviews in accordance with the guidelines of Achieving Best Evidence.

Interdepartmental cooperation

Since the inception of Bluestone, a CSM has been allocated to work alongside Bluestone in the same office, further enabling forensic submissions to be expedited.

An intelligence officer has been dedicated to assist Bluestone. This officer conducts intelligence checks on the request of the investigating DC and also plays a role in tactical profiling. The intelligence officer is able to develop comparative case analysis, lists of possible offenders of interest, assist with the identification of stranger rapes, identify associates through call pattern / cell-site analysis and produce geographical hotspot maps.

New working practices

New analytical processes have been introduced – namely the development of a Bluestone Tasking Meeting and associated Tactical Assessment, completed by intelligence officers in conjunction with Bluestone's DC's. This detailed document includes information on offender risk and opportunities, ongoing investigations, local crime series, hotspot analysis and upcoming prisoner releases. The document is reviewed on a fortnightly basis and allows senior officers to task resources with a view to preventing further incidents of rape and targeting suspected offenders.

A streamlined approach with the CPS has been adopted whereby one of four specialist rape prosecutors attends the Bluestone office twice a week to solely provide advice and decisions regarding rapes and serious sexual assaults.

Bluestone has worked with the corporate communications team to develop a plan to not only advertise success in our community but also to disseminate key messages.

Bluestone have developed lines of communication and points of contact in a number of third party support agencies. As a matter of course referrals are now made on behalf of victims in order to offer them greater support.

ASSESSMENT

Victim Case study

This case study reveals the complexities of rape investigations and provide convincing anecdotal evidence for the value added by a dedicated team.

Victim 'A' was a sex worker who was tied up and repeatedly raped. She was initially reluctant to proceed with the prosecution and was struggling with drug dependency issues. The victim received support from the Police, from an Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) and the One25 Project. This enabled her to move away from drugs and support a prosecution.

At the time of the offence, the victim was also pregnant and at risk of having her baby removed. A mother and baby placement was organised and she has now been able to move away from Bristol with her young daughter. The victim felt able to give evidence and the suspect was found guilty and sentenced to seven years imprisonment.

Investigations

The range and complexity of crimes managed by the Bluestone team have produced many investigative challenges. A brief overview of the above case describes how Bluestone have utilised forensics, covert tactics, media strategies and joined up working to detect offences.

The Bluestone team

All officers in Bluestone team have requested to be members of the team because they want to investigate rape and serious sexual offences and recognise the importance of high-quality care for every victim they deal with.

Processes

The Bluestone approach recognises that early Police intervention is crucial for the development of the investigative plan and the availability of Bluestone officers is matched by a timely scene attendance by first response officers. The average time it now takes for an FRO to respond to a victim is now down to 17 minutes, ensuring the maximisation of evidential opportunities. This has been supplemented by specific training for call handlers, ensuring a prioritised response.

The co-location of SAIT Officers within the Bluestone office enables constant and consistent communication with the Investigating DC. This presents a professional and coordinated Police response to the investigation, one which provides victim support, achieves best evidence and increases victim confidence in service provision.

Ensuring that all staff are sufficiently accredited in victim and suspect interviews and have appropriate facilities has increased the quality of interviews. The ability to interview a victim at home has led to them providing improved evidence in a supported environment and on a number of occasions has led to the progression of cases whereby the victim would have otherwise declined to prosecute.

Investigations are now reviewed by a single D/Insp in accordance with serious crime review framework. The crime is reviewed on receipt and every seven days thereafter, ensuring accountability and consistent progression. This consistency ensures a clear investigative strategy.

Since the inception of Bluestone, officers have benefited from greater consistency in terms of forensic advice and appropriate submissions. This has been achieved through improving working relationships with the dedicated CSM working alongside Bluestone.

The specialist intelligence role has enabled a preventative strategy to be developed for rape and serious sexual assaults, similar to those developed for priority crime. It has led to an improved capability in identifying unknown suspects and locating further evidence.

Media Awareness

The Communication Plan has helped raise the profile of all associated operations and campaigns. The success of the Communication Plan is its ability to identify key audiences and match them with appropriate and innovative communication channels.

External Liaison

Successful investigations cannot be progressed in isolation. Bluestone has developed its investigative approach whilst also engaging a wide range of key stakeholders. Including:

- The Bridge – a facility providing forensic examinations of victims either from Police or self-referral
- The One25 project – a charity working with sex workers in the city. Bluestone have engaged with the Project to raise awareness of the team and Police practices and procedures
- The Brooke Advisory Service – Bluestone officers have given input to workers from this Service – the end result has been an improved working relationship and subsequent referrals to the Police.
- NEXTLINK - an independent agency who provide ISVA's (Independent sexual violence advisors)
- CPS - Effective liaison between the Police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is paramount and a joint Police / CPS Protocol exists which is subject to annual review. Bluestone offer representation at the Prosecution Team Performance Management Meetings, assisting with the development of performance frameworks. New charging procedures were introduced with a specialist rape lawyer available for face to face advice. The Bluestone team works to clear charging processes in relation to Full Code charging decisions and those relating to cases with offenders remanded in custody whereby the CPS Threshold Test applies.

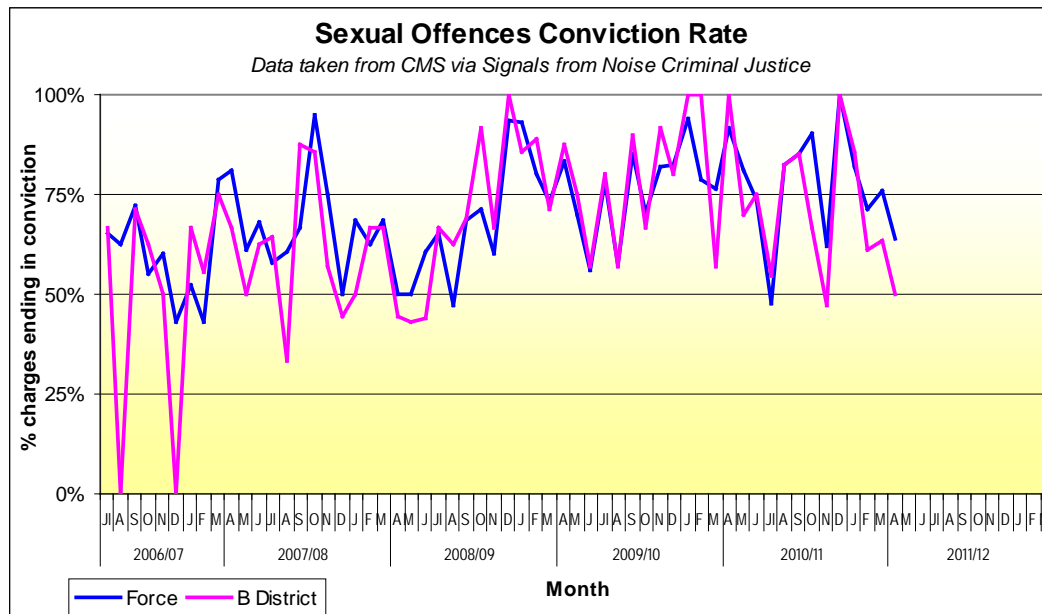
Key measure

A year after implementation an evaluation of BLUESTONE took place and has been collated from a number of different sources. Interviews have been held with BLUESTONE managers and staff and these are supported by quantitative analysis.

The results for the two key statistical indicators as of 21st September 2010 were:

- Detection rate – **30.5%** (previously 24.5%) an increase of 24%
- VDTP rate – **21.4%** (previously 34.7%) a decrease of 38%

A table showing the percentage of charges ending in conviction between 2006/07 and 2010/11 in Bristol (B district) and Avon and Somerset:



The increase in the detection rate places the force significantly above the national average of 25%.

National Force level data eludes to a direct correlation between positive detection outcomes and high no criming rates. The development of crime management process within Bluestone has proven that strong performance in both areas is not mutually exclusive with the no criming rate decreasing from 18.5% to 15%. Illustrating that these results have not been achieved simply by “no criming” weak cases to increase the VTDP and Detection rate.

Attrition whereby crimes with suspects have an ‘insufficient to proceed’ disposal have also dropped dramatically from 65.6% to 38.8%. The results from the profiling data infers that the added value work conducted by Bluestone in relation to victim support and prevention activity is having a positive effect.

As the above assessment illustrates, the implementation of Bluestone has been a success.

PART THREE – PROJECT DETAILS

Project name: Operation Bluestone

Project location: Bristol

Contact Details

Application Author's name: DC Andrew Coggins (427)

Organisation: Avon and Somerset Police

Telephone Number: 0117 9455377

Email address: andrew.coggins@avonandsomerset.police.uk

Alternative contact for application: Kate Woolgrove

Organisation: Avon and Somerset Police

Telephone number: 07818 587839

Email address: kate.woolgrove@avonandsomerset.police.uk

Dates and location of project

Start date: 21 September 2009

End date: 20 September 2010

Please indicate whether the project is:

Ongoing Completed Current

CSP name:

CSP area or region⁵:

Partners actively involved in your project

⁵ Greater London, East Midlands, West Midlands, NE England, NW England, SE England, SW England, Yorkshire/Humber, Eastern England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland

Please list key partners contributing to the project:

- A. CPS
- B. One25 project
- C. SARC
- D. Safer Bristol
- E. Bristol Drugs Project
- F. Nextlink
- G.

Crime type(s) addressed

You have told us about the theme within which your project should be entered. Please use this section to set out which specific crime types your project addressed (Crime types could include⁶ anti-social behaviour, burglary, domestic violence, gang activity, hate crime, knife crime, night time economy, violent crime and criminal damage).

- Violence against women
- Rape and Sexual assault
-
-

Resources required for project

Financial budget (£): Nil

Resource budget: Nil

Source of budget: N/A

Sharing learning

Other Benefits

Were there any other benefits e.g. community outcome, from the project not directly linked to the problem as it was initially defined?

- Better confidence amongst women that we will achieve a result in court

Lessons Learned

What were the three most important lessons from the project and three things you would do differently if you were to do the work again?

- Victim care is paramount to increased detection and conviction rates. It was highlighted that victim care within ASC needed significant improvement.

⁶ The list of crime types provided is not exhaustive

- Alignment of specific offices to tackle the problem is important is when investigating this type of crime. Now dedicated SAIT officers have teamed up with third sector agencies like the CPS and have provided training so that the wider audience understand the issues surrounding a subject that has a lot of stigma attached to it. This in turn means jurors have a wider understanding.
- Prevention and raising awareness around the issue has been a specific learning point. Making the wider Avon and Somerset community aware of the Force's dedication and understanding of such issues has increased confidence. Victims are now aware help and support is available to all.

PART FOUR - CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

Information requested within this section of the application form is compulsory. Each question should be answered. This section is not assessed as part of the Tilley Awards but failure to answer all the questions may result in your application being rejected from the competition

Q: Can you confirm that the partners listed carried out the project as stated?

Yes **Yes** No

Q: Can you confirm that the details stated are factually correct?

Yes **Yes** No

Q: Is there any reason why the contents of this application should not be made publicly available? If so please state the reason/s and refer to guidance concerning sharing Tilley application submissions.

Yes No **No**

Please mark the box below with an X to indicate that all organisations involved in the project have been notified of this entry (this is to prevent duplicate entries of the same project):

Please mark the box below with an X to indicate that your CSP/LCJB Chair is content for this project to be entered into the Tilley Awards

Please mark the box below with an X to confirm that this project has only been entered into the 2011 Tilley Awards once.