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Testing the effects of delivering procedural justice by reassurance telephone calls to victims of screened out vehicle crime: evidence from a randomised controlled trial

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Thesis Title

Testing the effects of delivering procedural justice by reassurance telephone calls to victims of screened out vehicle crime: evidence from a randomised controlled trial.

Research Question

Does procedural justice delivered as a reassurance telephone call to victims of screened out vehicle crime impact on their satisfaction, compared with victims who receive no follow up call? Is this satisfaction influenced by the reporting process, the type of vehicle crime they experience, the length of the call and demographic characteristics?

Research Design

The research was a randomised controlled trial based on vehicle crime reported in London.

Data and Methods

The trial investigated the impact of reassurance calls on the satisfaction of victims of vehicle crime where the case had been screened out as not being suitable for further investigation. Participants were victims reporting theft of motor vehicle and theft from motor vehicle where their case had been screened out within 48 hours. Most participants reported their crime to police over the telephone or online. An exclusion process removed screened in crimes, other vehicle crimes and criteria that precluded survey eligibility. Participants were randomised to treatment and control groups. Both received the standard response of a 'victim letter.' The treatment group only received the

intervention of a reassurance call. They were shown empathy and the reason why their case had been screened out was explained. They were also offered crime prevention advice and information on what the police are doing to tackle vehicle crime. Participants were sent an online questionnaire survey. The survey results were analysed, and statistical significance tests applied.

Findings

62 per cent of respondents who received the reassurance call expressed satisfaction. This compared to 40 per cent satisfaction for control participants (a 56 per cent increase). The satisfaction of those reporting by telephone increased by 12 percentage points. However, the satisfaction of participants reporting online rose by 51 percentage points, a striking 188 per cent increase, and higher than that previously achieved for in-person reporting. This appears to reflect differences in procedural justice received in the reporting process, with positive 'expectancy disconfirmation' (Oliver 1981; Chandek and Porter 1998) boosting initial satisfaction, but this positive effect being finite and declining with further doses. Treatment participants were also more likely to report that their view of the police had improved as a result, with the effect again being greater for those reporting online. The relative impact of the intervention on vehicle crime types was examined. This showed more satisfaction for those who had their vehicle broken into, as opposed to it being stolen completely. This may be influenced by the financial loss experienced, but also previous procedural justice that a victim has received in reporting it. Analyses were also applied on relative effects based on the age, gender, ethnicity and other characteristics of participants, and their reporting experience. These revealed some limited variations in effect.

Conclusions and Policy Implications

Increasing demand and prioritisation mean that the capacity of police to deliver outcomes of arrests and detections for volume crime is constrained. This trial however demonstrates that there is opportunity to achieve a much improved service to the public through better procedure. The relatively simple action of a reassurance telephone call would mean that victims reporting their crime by telephone or online would be much more satisfied than they are at present. The impact of this would be significant, as nearly half of crime in London is reported virtually (Met Police 2021a). This trial develops a new area of research, where there has been scant previous experimental work. It challenges the findings of a recent exploratory study (Clark 2021) that suggested reassurance calls improved the satisfaction of victims of cycle theft, but had little impact on vehicle crime victims. It also provides evidence that a reassurance call not only increases the satisfaction with the service provided, it also enhances a more positive view of the police. These findings are timely and relevant. The Met Police is facing declining rates of victim satisfaction and unprecedented challenges to public trust and confidence. This paper provides evidence that this trend can be reversed, and performance significantly improved, through limited reallocation of resources. Furthermore, the model used is easily transferrable to other police forces, making this study equally pertinent to improving national policing performance.

Abstract

This paper reports on a randomised controlled trial that tested the impact of procedural justice on victim satisfaction. This was delivered as telephone calls to victims of vehicle crime in London and was a joint endeavour between the Met Police and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPaC). Vehicle crime was selected as it is one of the most common volume crimes, impacting on thousands of people, and it has one of the lowest detection rates, with most cases screened out following initial investigation. MOPaC surveys show declining satisfaction by victims over the past year. Reversing this trend is vital to improving service delivery to Londoners. Most vehicle crime is reported by telephone or online. Those reporting by telephone will talk to a police operator. They may then speak to an investigator in the Telephone and Digital Investigation Unit (TDIU). Unless they have had their car stolen, most victims will not speak to an investigator and only receive a 'victim letter.' Those reporting their crime online will only receive the letter. This experiment identified a sample of vehicle crime victims as those whose cases were screened out within 48 hours. Participants were randomised into treatment and control groups. The treatment group received the intervention of a reassurance call. This provided procedural justice. They were shown empathy and the reason their crime had been screened out was explained. They were also offered information on crime prevention and what the Met Police is doing to tackle vehicle crime. All participants were sent an online survey and MOPaC undertook independent analyses of the results. This identified a very large effect size among victims receiving the reassurance call. This was much stronger for those reporting online than by telephone. This is likely influenced by variations in the dose of procedural justice they had already received in the reporting process. Importantly,

victims in the treatment group also expressed an improved view of the police. Again, this was greater among those reporting online. Analyses indicated more satisfaction for victims who had property taken from their vehicle than those who had the vehicle itself stolen. This indicates that crime type is a factor in determining satisfaction from procedure rather than outcome. The trial also found some variations in effect across victim demographics and specific elements of the reporting experience, including the duration of the call. This thesis develops an under-explored field of criminology and has direct and very current relevance to the Met Police and wider UK policing. Whilst further research is suggested to test the impact on other crimes and different methods of reassurance delivery, this paper recommends the operationalisation of this simple model to significantly improve the satisfaction of victims of crime and public trust and confidence in the police.

Acknowledgements

My thanks are to the team of police officers and staff in Met Police Crime Management Services who volunteered to be part of this trial and ensured its successful delivery. In particular, Sergeant Matt Jones who, as a convert to 'evidence based policing', injected enthusiasm and motivation to the team for the duration of the experiment. I am also grateful to the Evidence and Insight team in the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPaC) who supported this study and funded the survey. Special thanks to Michael Keenan who undertook independent analyses of the results. Finally, my gratitude to Dr Barak Ariel at the Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge, for his encouragement and guidance.

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INTRODUCTION

For many years policing and the wider criminal justice system tended to view offences as crimes against society rather than individuals. Victim engagement and participation in the process was often side-lined, resulting in poor satisfaction and 'secondary victimisation.' Recognition of victims' rights emerged in the 1970's, with legislation introduced in many countries (Joffee 2009). In the UK, the Victim's Charter was delivered in 2004, setting out services and information victims should expect to receive. These rights were enhanced in the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime, creating a system designed to be more responsive to victims' needs (Ministry of Justice 2021). Furthermore, all police forces in England and Wales are now required to gather victim satisfaction and public confidence information, with surveys putting public perceptions at the heart of policing performance. Notwithstanding these strides, aspirations for comprehensive victim-focused policing are often not met, despite the ability to improve the treatment of victims often being in the hands of the police. For example, lack of timely and accurate information on investigations is one of the biggest drivers of dissatisfaction (Victim Support 2011; HMIC 2014; MOPaC 2021a). The Crime Survey for England and Wales identified that what 19 per cent of victims wanted most was support, information and advice, but that this was received in only 9 per cent of cases (Freeman 2013).

Technological advents have made things worse. Since April 2020, a separate 'TDIU Survey' has been used to assess the satisfaction of victims reporting crime over the telephone and online to the Telephone and Digital Investigation Unit. The survey identifies that victims reporting their crime through these channels are less satisfied

than those reporting to police in person, and that online reporting generates less satisfaction than reporting by telephone (MOPaC 2021a). Victim satisfaction across all reporting methods has seen a significant decline over the past 20 months (**Figure 1**). Furthermore, the Met Police has faced unprecedented challenges to trust and confidence with, for the first time, less than half of Londoners believing that it is doing a good job (MOPaC 2021a).

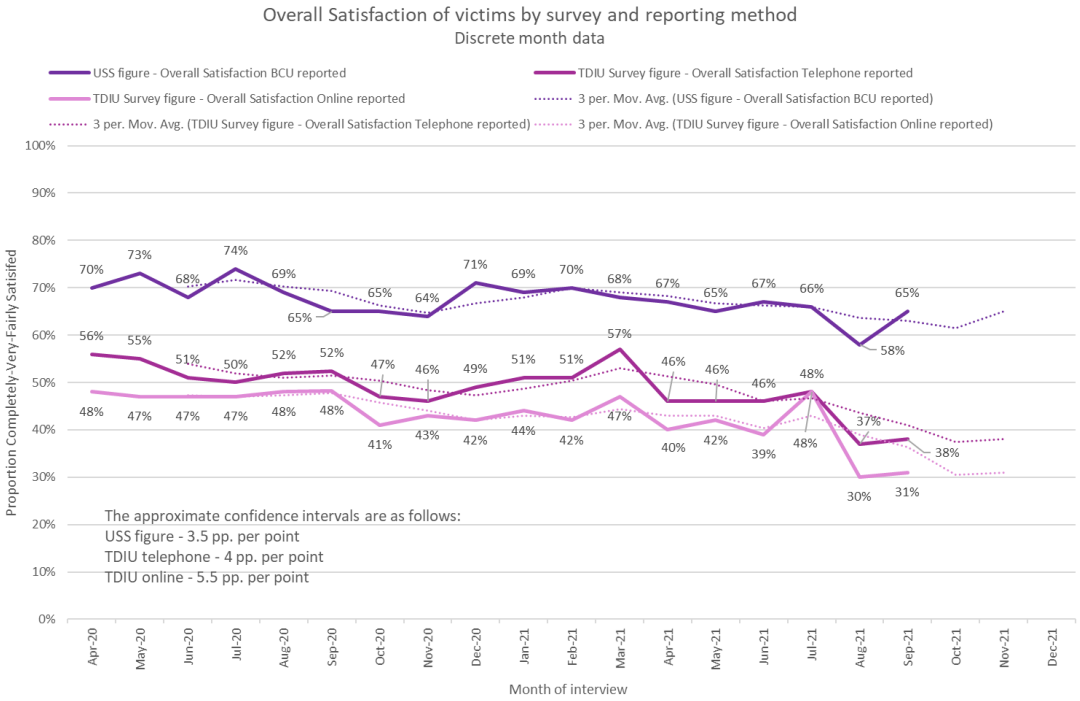

Figure 1: Metropolitan Police victim satisfaction 2020 - 2021 (MOPaC 2021a)

For many victims, particularly those reporting online (except for burglary and robbery), the only police response will be an emailed 'victim letter', providing their crime reference number and advice on crime prevention and victim support. Whilst all crimes are investigated, the majority of volume crimes will be screened out following initial enquiries due to the absence of solvability factors (Coupe *et al.* 2019). Vehicle crime is one of the most common volume crimes, with 100,908 cases reported in London last year (Met Police 2022). At the same time, it has one of the lowest detection rates at

1.23 per cent (Met Police 2022). Coincidently, it also has a low satisfaction rate (**Table I**). Average satisfaction for vehicle crime since the TDIU Survey commenced is 37 per cent (Met Police). As with other crime types, there is higher satisfaction amongst those reporting by telephone (41 per cent) than online (30 per cent), but both show decline over the past year (MOPaC 2021a).

Table I: Vehicle Crime Satisfaction Rates (MOPaC 2021a)

Vehicle crime only			
	Q1 21/22	Q2 21/22	FY to Q2 21/22
Online	32%	27%	30%
Telephone	43%	39%	41%
Combined	39%	35%	37%

With limited opportunity to increase detection rates, if the police wish to increase the satisfaction of victims, they must change the process of 'letting victims down' (Clark *et al.* 2022). In fact, victims are more interested in how they are dealt with than the arrest of the offender (Zamir and Harpaz 2018). UK victim surveys reveal that people do understand that police need to prioritise resources (Victim Support Survey 2011) and what matters to them is to be treated fairly and courteously and to be provided with sufficient information (MOPaC 2021a). An increase in virtual reporting, accounting for 40 per cent of crime in London (Met Police 2021a), and a generic letter sent to victims, do not appear to contribute to victim satisfaction.

Interestingly, there is very little research on this topic, and even fewer experimental studies into the effect of changing police processes to improve satisfaction. A recent exploratory and small-scale test found that reassurance calls improved satisfaction for cycle theft, but not vehicle crime (Clark *et al.* 2022). However, there is no other

research in this area, at least in policing research. The present study reports on a city-wide experiment and focuses on a large number of victims of vehicle crime in London. This research postulates that procedurally just reassurance telephone calls to victims whose cases will not be further investigated increases their satisfaction compared to the standard procedure. Given the size of the trial, planned sub-group analyses were also conducted. This was to study the breakdown of satisfaction against clinically important variables, including the method of reporting, the type of vehicle crime, the length of the reassurance call and, importantly, victim demographics. The dissertation follows the Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials (Schulz *et al.* 2010) which ensure transparent reporting of the experimental design, participant flow and analyses of findings (**Appendix A**).

Chapter 1: Literature Review

Overview

This chapter explores the available research on victim satisfaction and attempts by police to improve it. It firstly explains how this is framed against the concepts of procedural and informational justice. The literature presents a cogent argument that, whilst outcomes are important to victims, the procedure matters more. It then provides an overview of the practical application of procedural justice to identify key predictors of satisfaction. The review next defines satisfaction as being distinct from trust and confidence and perceptions of police legitimacy and distils the relationship between them.

The review goes on to examine evidence that the effect of police contact interacts with factors such as victim demographics, their expectations and the nature of the crime, bringing multiplicity and intersectionality into the discussion. Next, as an increasing number of interactions with victims are conducted virtually by telephone and online, known implications are reviewed. There is surprisingly little research on this topic in the field of criminology. This prompted the literature search to extend to the customer service centre and healthcare environments. The review concludes that there is a conspicuous gap in understanding the impact of procedural justice delivered as a telephone call on victim satisfaction. This frames the research questions of this study to test these effects in the setting of vehicle crime in London.

Victim satisfaction and procedural justice

The 'instrumental' interpretation argues that the role of the police is to be effective in tackling crime, and victim satisfaction is based on how successful they are in securing arrests and convictions. However, this view is dated. Instead, perceptions of fairness in the way that police operate are actually more important to victims. A fair and professional application of police procedures shapes victim satisfaction, not the outcome of those procedures (Tyler 1988). This concept of procedural justice suggests that satisfaction is shaped by how victims perceive they are treated in their encounter with police. This theory was first introduced in the study of civil disputes, which found complainants more likely to consider the system 'fair' if they participated in the process (Thibaut and Walker 1975). Tyler developed the concept in criminological studies in the United States, providing a radical interpretation of how people perceive encounters with police (Tyler 1988). This theory has since gained credence in other settings, including London, with empirical studies based on panel and cross-sectional survey methodologies (Fitzgerald 2002; Jackson and Bradford 2009; Bradford and Myhill 2015).

To demonstrate the link between procedural justice and victim satisfaction it is necessary to understand what the concept means. Victims want to express their 'voice' and to be listened to. They have a 'standing' and want to be treated with dignity and respect. Victims need to 'trust' police motives and to be treated with unbiased 'neutrality' (Bradford *et al*. 2009a). Once these conditions are met, victims will be more satisfied with police.

Within this line of research, studies have identified when the different components of procedural justice are strongest predictors of satisfaction. The time taken to report and

investigate a crime is important. The longer it takes, the less interest the police appear to have, and the lower the satisfaction (Brandl and Horvath 1991; Zevitz and Gurnack 1991; Coupe and Griffiths 1999; Tewksbury and West 2001; Kumar 2018). Analysis of the recent drop in satisfaction in the Met Police identified a direct correlation with caller waiting times and investigation backlogs (MOPaC 2021a). Ahio's (2017) regression analysis of Met Police surveys concluded the best predicator of satisfaction is providing reassurance. This study identified victims feeling they are taken seriously as the second biggest driver, which is supported by other research (Myhill and Bradford 2012). They counter a Canadian study that argued police do not have time to explain procedures to victims, who have unrealistic expectations based on media and popular culture (Huey 2010).

Victim satisfaction and informational justice

Other research focuses on the perception that police are making the right decisions based on accurate information (Greenberg 1993; Colquitt 2001). The Crime Survey for England and Wales reports more people being satisfied when subject to a 'police stop', with obligatory explanation by police of their grounds to do so, than those reporting a crime (Bradford *et al.* 2009b). Informational justice is influenced by the perceived thoroughness of an investigation, such as how long police spend at the scene (Brandl and Horvath 1991). Several studies place importance on keeping victims updated (Shapland 1985; Newburn and Merry 1990; Wemmers *et al.* 1995; Van den Bos *et al.* 1997; Coupe and Griffiths 1999; Fitzgerald 2002; Tapley 2003; Ahio 2017). One of the very few experiments on this subject identified greater satisfaction among households who received a Met Police newsletter (Hohl 2010). However, research is

mixed on the effect of providing information on satisfaction. A study in India found no increase in satisfaction among victims being given a copy of their complaint (Kumar 2018). This finding is partly supported by research that identified it is less important what victims are told, than how they are told it, and that information must be easily understood (Ashworth 1993). Furthermore, a Netherlands study of victim encounters with police and prosecutors identified victims were more concerned about being treated with dignity and respect and less about police 'neutrality' (Wemmers *et al*. 1995). A study of victim satisfaction across several countries produced the surprising result that there was higher satisfaction in jurisdictions where there were less referrals to support agencies (Kesteren *et al.* 2013). However, other research has found referrals for support do increase satisfaction (Tewksbury and West 2001; Ahio 2017).

Reassurance policing and relevance to legitimacy theory

The literature reveals no consistent definition for reassurance, which is often associated with reducing fear of crime. Bradford *et al.* (2009a) provide a wider definition of 'reassurance policing' covering a range of encounters, from visible patrols to quality contacts. This trial follows their expansive definition, with reassurance calls operationalised in the context of procedural and informational justice. Satisfaction has been defined as being *'a retrospective assessment of specific police actions and performance'* (Bradford and Myhill 2015). This is different to trust, confidence and perceptions of legitimacy. A victim can be satisfied with how their crime was dealt with, whilst not having confidence in overall police performance (Myhill and Bradford 2012).

Trust and confidence are wider perceptions beyond specific interactions with police. Their relationship is of importance, as any correlation amplifies the effect of improving satisfaction. Trust and confidence are closely related, and routinely accompany each other in police parlance, but they are also different concepts. Confidence is more focused on police delivering outcomes, whilst trust is rooted in the process (Jackson and Sunshine 2007). Zelditch defines legitimacy as *'when people believe that the decisions made, and the rules enacted by an authority are in some way right and proper and ought to be followed'* (Zelditch 2008). Tyler subscribed to this interpretation, defining legitimacy from the viewpoint of the public (Tyler 2008; Tyler and Huo 2002). Bottoms and Tankebe argue that legitimacy is articulated from the perspectives of both the 'audience' recognising power and the 'power-holder' justifying that power, with a 'dialogic' relationship between the two (Bottoms and Tankebe 2017).

Skogan concluded there is an 'asymmetrical' relationship between police contact and trust and confidence that support legitimacy. That is, people who have no contact with police express higher levels of confidence (Skogan 2006; Skogan 2012). He argued that this dilemma is influenced by the fact that police encounters are usually set against the experience of being a victim or suspect. This is exacerbated by negativity bias, where people are more likely to remember negative experiences. Another study concluded victims have a poorer view of police than non-victims because performance is a predictor of legitimacy (Aviv and Weisburd 2016).

However, other research has presented tentative optimism that, whilst poor police encounters dent confidence, the right contact can have 'some positive impact' (Bradford *et al.* 2009b; Merry *et al* 2011). They interpret this being because police have

limited opportunity to deliver outcomes in an encounter, but they can show fairness in the procedure. Brandl (1994) also identified that positive encounters translate into positive views of the police, and Jackson and Sunshine (2007) concluded that trust and confidence are generated by police treating people with dignity and respect. These studies combine to demonstrate a more 'symmetrical' relationship between procedural justice and trust and confidence. Mazorelle *et al.* (2013a) went further in seeking to develop the correlational relationship identified in panel studies into an experiment to demonstrate causal effect. The Queensland Community Engagement Trial involved a randomised trial of motorists stopped for breath testing, with the treatment group dealt with according to a 'procedurally just' script. It found the treatment group were more satisfied with the encounter and expressed more trust and confidence in police. Her systematic review of studies also identified that procedural justice enhances police legitimacy (Mazorelle *et al.* 2013b). However, a replication of this experiment in Scotland came to the opposite conclusion that contact with police reduces perceptions of legitimacy, although this was fraught with implementation problems (MacQueen and Bradford 2015). Tankebe (2014) reports that procedural justice is one of four factors (together with lawfulness, effectiveness and distributive justice) that influence legitimacy. He also highlights the importance of variations across countries and cultures and suggests perceptions of legitimacy are more reliant on outcomes where crime rates are high (Tankebe 2009).

Extraneous factors affecting satisfaction with police

Some studies have treated victims as one homogenous group (Felson and Pare 2008). However, there is now broad agreement that peoples' views of police are not simply

determined by how they are treated or the outcome of the police investigation. The nature of the offence, demographic characteristics of victims and where they live are examples of factors found to influence satisfaction (Brandl *et al.* 1994; Laxminarayan *et al.* 2013). Some research also indicates a vicarious effect, where the experience of family or friends influences a person's view of police and their satisfaction if they become a victim of crime (Hohl *et al.* 2010).

Crime type Victim satisfaction varies depending on the nature of the crime. One early study found victims of serious crimes to be more satisfied than volume crime victims (Poister and McDavid 1978). Merry *et al.* (2011) found victims of hate crime were less satisfied than burglary victims. The MOPaC satisfaction survey in London identifies higher satisfaction for burglary victims than other volume crimes (MOPaC 2021a). This is likely to be affected by victims of this crime type being offered a police visit with face-to-face interaction. Furthermore, two studies found more satisfaction with police for theft of motor vehicle and burglary than domestic incidents and assaults (Brandl and Horvath 1991; Laxminarayan *et al.* 2013). They conclude that, for the latter crimes, the victim is more likely to identify the suspect and so can expect a 'positive outcome' such as an arrest. Clark *et al.* (2022) identified that reassurance calls had significant impact on the satisfaction of victims of cycle theft, but 'negligible effect' for vehicle crime.

Age Studies indicate a relationship between age and satisfaction, where older victims are usually more likely to be satisfied than young victims (Percy 1980; Kuscow *et al.* 1997; Merry *et al.* 2011). This is also a theme in the MOPaC survey (MOPaC 2021a). Brandl and Horvath (1991) show how people over 60 years old who were victims of serious property crimes were more likely to be satisfied with police than younger

victims. Hibberd's (2021) analyses of UK surveys reports that this is not simply a case of being older. Instead, there is a gradual rise in satisfaction from 16 to 64 years, and then a rapid increase thereafter. Hibberd (2021) speculates this may be more to do with police officers' perceptions that older victims need more attention, so they provide them with enhanced procedural justice.

Gender The literature identified mixed findings on the relationship between gender and victim satisfaction. On the one hand, some studies found no such association (Brandl and Horvath 1991; Kuscow *et al.* 1997; Felson and Pare 2008). On the other, Tewksbury and West (2001) and Merry *et al.* (2011) found greater satisfaction among female victims, whilst Percy (1980), Norris and Thompson (1993) and Clark (2021) found male victims are more likely to be satisfied.

Ethnicity Percy (1980) found that the African-American community in the United States to be less satisfied than whites. However, where these differences do appear, they are less pronounced than for age, and several studies conclude that the link between race and satisfaction may be more tenuous than assumed (Coupe and Griffiths 1999; Tewksbury and West 2001).

Expectations of victims

Chandek and Porter (1998) concluded that no specific hypotheses can be made on the influence of victim demographics. They and others use the 'expectancy disconfirmation' model that focuses importance on victim expectations (Oliver 1981; Brandl and Horvath 1991; Wilson & Jasinski 2004). This argues that satisfaction is

achieved when there is 'positive disconfirmation' of the expected level of service received. This presents opportunity for satisfaction to be increased by an explanation of the process which will generate this disconfirmation.

Victim satisfaction in volume crimes

There is a dearth of research on volume crime, with criminological research, as with police resourcing, focused on 'high harm' crime. This crime impacts on more people and has the lowest rates of detection. There is a 3.1 per cent chance of becoming a victim of vehicle crime, making it the third most frequent crime in England and Wales (CSEW 2020). In London, it accounts for 15 per cent of all crime. 65 per cent is screened out following initial investigation (Met Police 2021a), with just 1.23 per cent resulting in detection (Met Police 2022). With little prospect of significant improvements in outcomes, the role of procedure in victim satisfaction is of real importance to police service delivery.

Modus of reporting (telephone *vs*. online)

The shift towards *'technology-meditated service encounters'* (Chicu *et al.* 2020) means that customer satisfaction across all settings, including the police, is increasingly more dependent on virtual rather than face-to-face interactions. There is however a paucity of empirical evidence on the effect of delivering a procedurally just police response by telephone. Stafford (2017a; 2017b) examined procedural justice in responding to 101 calls. He concluded that callers are more interested in getting accurate information than the performance metric of response time. Cross (2016) studied the impact of telephone calls to elderly fraud victims in Canada in increasing satisfaction and reducing repeat

victimisation. Sixsmith *et al.* (2008) examined the effects of calling A & E patients with high domestic violence indicators to identify more victims, but with minimal results. An Irish police report identified the value of call backs to victims, but concluded these must be focused on high harm crime and vulnerable victims (Garda Siochana 2020). Similarly, in a study of MOPaC surveys, Jansson (2008) noted that rising demand requires that crime reporting becomes increasingly automated, but that this has negative impact on satisfaction. A US study found high satisfaction for victims given online access to updates on their case (Irazola *et al.* 2013). Furthermore, digital access, such as TrackMyCrime, has been adopted by some forces in England and Wales, although there has yet to be analyses of satisfaction (The Guardian 2011). Wedlock and Tapley (2016) noted the opportunity to use different methods of contact to improve satisfaction and that '*further research is required into what communication strategies are the most effective'*. It is surprising that the only previous experiment on the impact of telephone contact on victim satisfaction is the recent study by Clark *et al.* (2022). For this reason the search of the literature is extended to the settings of call centres and the health sector.

Research on call backs in other services

Studies into call centres conclude that people are generally less satisfied with telephone than face-to-face interaction (Bennington *et al.* 2000). Chicu *et al.* (2020) explored different variables that drive customer satisfaction. They highlight the irony of call centres being established as 'marketing tools', but being associated with lower satisfaction and the lack of training investment in staff, the main connection between company and customer. They stress the benefits of 'quality of service' in telephone

encounters to build a 'relationship' with the customer. This contrasts with the 'production line' approach, focusing on quantitative output and demand management, with the value of the customer limited to that transaction. Delivering this quality of service requires motivating staff through 'empowerment and support', rather than 'monitoring and controlling' (Gilmore 2021). Such studies reveal parallels with the concept of procedural justice and a causal relationship is identified between service quality and customer satisfaction (Maddern *et al.* 2007). As in policing, the body of literature identifies a dichotomy between companies measuring their performance on waiting times and numbers of calls handled, and customers regarding empathy, respect and the authority of call centre staff as being most important. This research confirms that customers will be dissatisfied if call centre staff are impolite, inattentive or there is poor general service (Helms and Mayo 2008). It also demonstrates that customer satisfaction is a complex business and that variables that impact on satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not necessarily the same. For example, customers often identify length of call time as a reason for dissatisfaction, but rarely as a factor in satisfaction (Helms and Mayo 2008). There is also evidence that a negative predisposition to a company will constraint the impact on satisfaction that may be achieved (Sharma *et al.* 2009).

The impact of telephone contact on patient satisfaction is an expanding area of research, with healthcare seeking to better manage demand with initiatives such as NHS Direct. This has become more relevant with face-to-face consultations limited by COVID-19 and backlogs placing huge demands on the health sector. Some studies have produced very positive results. An experiment on follow-up telephone calls to day surgery patients in British Columbia found both more satisfaction and better recovery rates

(Daniels *et al.* 2016). Similarly, post-operative follow-up calls to the parents of child sleep apnoea patients enabled better management of demand and achieved 100 per cent satisfaction (Walijee *et al.* 2020). A study of telephone calls to lung cancer patients resulted in better satisfaction and was effective in assessing disease status (Mathew *et al.* 2017). However, a systematic review of telephone consultations in the UK reveals that, whilst they have potential to reduce workloads on GP's and A&E departments, there are mixed results on their effectiveness in achieving this (Bunn *et al.* 2005). Whilst satisfaction with NHS Direct is generally high, there is evidence that the service is less likely to be used by the elderly and minority groups and that this demand is being displaced elsewhere. A study of a GP out-of-hours telephone service also found mixed satisfaction by users (Payne *et al.* 2001). The main reason for dissatisfaction was the perceived inability of doctors to make a correct diagnosis over the phone. As with procedural justice, patients reported greater satisfaction when they were given reassurance and time was taken to talk to them.

Research Questions

The existing literature identifies that procedures are better predictors of satisfaction than outcomes. This makes procedural justice, not just a theoretical concept, but rather a practical tool to be embedded in everyday encounters with the public. However, it does not mean police should 'give up' on securing arrests and convictions. The distinction between procedure and outcome is not binary and detection rates and 'clear ups' will always be prominent in any policing plan as a litmus of police effectiveness. Evidence indicates that better procedure may translate into wider trust and confidence in the police and their legitimacy as an institution. Moreover, it is apparent that poor quality

encounters damage these perceptions. The review is also revealing by what it does not tell us. At apparent variance to the priority to be victim-focused, the use of victim satisfaction surveys in every force and the fact that for an increasing number of victims contact with the police is virtual, there is scant research on the impact of telephone calls on satisfaction. The settings of call centres and healthcare offer some pointers. However, there are differences between customers, patients and victims of crime. The exploratory research by Clark (2021) stands almost in isolation in focusing on the effect of reassurance telephone calls on victim satisfaction. The systematic review of victim satisfaction studies concluded *'citizen interactions go a long way'* (Mazorelle *et al.* 2013b). The question is whether this can be achieved by a telephone call and the benefits relative to the costs. This demands experimental replication.

Thus, using the case study of vehicle crime, this experiment tested the hypothesis that reassurance telephone calls to a treatment group of victims of screened out crime achieve greater satisfaction than a control group who receive no call. It further aimed to test whether relative satisfaction is predicated by previous contact with police in the reporting process, crime type, victim demographics and the duration of the call.

Chapter 2: Methods

Trial overview

The trial aimed to identify the causal effect of making reassurance telephone calls to victims whose crime reports have been screened out on their levels of satisfaction compared to control conditions. We look at vehicle crime as a case study. A randomised controlled trial (RCT) design was used as the methodological standard to demonstrate causal effect. Eligible participants were identified by their crime report number. An online survey, regularly used by MOPaC to gauge satisfaction with the Met Police, was then administered. Beyond the treatment effect, we were particularly keen to look at the breakdown of responses in terms of a number of clinically important factors: telephone *vs.* online reporters, theft of motor vehicle *vs.* theft from motor vehicle offences, victim demographics and the duration of the intervention. The design follows the Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials (CONSORT), which provide the template for reporting on randomised trials (Sherman 2009; Schulz *et al.* 2010). The CONSORT checklist is provided at **Appendix A**.

The trial was conducted over a period of three months, from 1 September to 30 November 2021. It was preceded by a pilot, on 24 to 25 August 2021, to test the methodology. A cohort of 6,992 vehicle crime victims were included in the experiment; 3,436 in the treatment group and 3,556 in the control (**Appendix F**). Participants were selected through an automated process based on the criteria that their crime was screened out within 48 hours of reporting. Most participants had reported by telephone or online, although some were done in person. Randomisation was by allocation of 'even' number crime reports for treatment and 'odd' numbers to the control. Both

groups received the standard response of a 'victim letter'. Only the treatment group received the intervention of a reassurance call and, where appropriate, were emailed crime prevention advice and a leaflet explaining action the Met Police is taking on vehicle crime (**Appendix D**). The trial team recorded whether an intervention had been delivered, how many attempts were made and the length of the call. The effect of the intervention was measured using the existing MOPaC TDIU Survey, which was adapted for the experiment. Treatment and control data was sent each week to MOPaC. A further exclusion process was applied before participant details were forwarded to Opinion Research Services (ORS) to send the online questionnaire to all participants. There were detailed analyses of the survey results, including Chi-Square tests for statistical significance, to determine the effect of the intervention relative to a number of variables.

Participants

Participants were identified by their unique Crime Report Investigation System (CRIS) number. This is automatically generated for each report of crime in London. They were members of the public who reported theft of motor vehicle or theft from motor vehicle in London and their crime had been screened out within 48 hours. These represent the two main types of 30 categories of vehicle crime. Other categories, such as criminal damage, taking and driving away and vehicle interference, were excluded as they do not form part of the TDIU Survey. The screening decision is based on the Crime Assessment Principles (Met Police 2021c). These provide guidance on whether a volume crime is screened in for further investigation. For example, if a suspect can be readily identified or CCTV is available. The 48-hour reporting to screening parameter was chosen because it produced an achievable number of treatment participants to receive the intervention within the capacity of the trial team. The pilot identified that

each team member could deliver about 20 interventions a day. With four staff deployed to this task on any day, 80 daily reassurance calls were realistic, meaning an optimal number of 160 participants in treatment and control. An automated download from CRIS to select participants was conducted five times a week. With fewer offences committed at the weekend, Saturday and Sunday were combined as one. No download was conducted on a Thursday to allow the team to keep on top of delivering interventions, and because this was the day data was sent to MOPaC.

The trial applied the 'intention to treat' principles, with participants remaining in the experiment, even if they could not be contacted. There were some cases where participants contacted police a day or two later, having been left a message by the team. They remained in the treatment group, but they were not given a reassurance call because they were contacting a general number and staff who were not part of the experiment team. On most days the team were able to at least attempt to contact all treatment participants. There were some days when increased numbers of crime reports meant this was not possible. These 'excess' cases, which totalled 660, also remained in the treatment group to reflect the operational environment. Rising crime by early November caused a backlog in screening decisions. This meant the 48-hour parameter provided insufficient participants and methodology was adapted to increase numbers.

Where crimes are screened in, victims receive an enhanced service, with a local officer making contact or visiting them to further investigate potential leads. As such, screened in crimes were excluded from the experiment. The exception was a small number (46) of cases where, during the treatment delivery, the team identified that the crime should in fact have been screened in. These remained within the experiment as the decision was a direct outcome of the treatment.

There was a three-stage process to apply exclusions, which is detailed in the CONSORT flow diagram (**Figure 6**). Firstly, the daily automated CRIS search excluded screened in vehicle crime, cases screened out but not within 48-hours and vehicle crime committed in South West (SW) BCU. The latter was due to a local initiative to test reassurance calls on victims. Whilst this was not an experiment, inclusion of SW-BCU within the trial would have duplicated reassurance calls and presented 'confounding factors' that might influence the results. The potential participants were then downloaded onto an MS Teams spreadsheet. Secondly, the trial team manually excluded further cases each day prior to the interventions according to the following criteria:

a) 'Crime-related incidents' which are recorded on CRIS, but are not technically crimes. For example, where a witness has reported a car being stolen, but no victim or vehicle are identified.

b) Cases with 'flags' to highlight aggravating factors, such as domestic violence and hate crime. (There would be follow-up police investigation for these crimes which could interfere with the results). This category also included crimes reported to the Met Police, but committed outside London.

c) Cases where there was no, or incorrectly recorded, victim contact details, or there was no personal victim, for example car hire companies.

Finally, a third automated screening process was conducted by MOPaC for the entire sample on receipt of the weekly data. The majority of exclusions at this stage were from the control group, which had not had the same scrutiny as the treatment group in the manual exclusion process. This followed the same exclusion criteria, with the additional requirement that the crimes had been committed within ten days of reporting.

This was necessary to meet the survey eligibility criteria. Whilst RCT modelling expects exclusions to be completed prior to intervention, a number could only be identified through the intervention process. For example, a crime that had been wrongly classified or a victim with incorrect contact details. It was also necessary to keep the processing of participants through the experiment as simple as possible. Sending data to MOPaC for exclusions prior to interventions would have complicated this process.

Settings

The trial included vehicle crime reported in all but four of London's 32 boroughs, representing 11 of the Met Police's 12 Basic Command Units (**Figure 2**). A London-wide setting was chosen to 'scale up' the model used by Clark (2021), which focused on one BCU. It was anticipated this would generate higher numbers of survey respondents to enable identification of statistically significant differences in the main and sub-group variables, and provide results that represent London rather than a single BCU. This approach was also influenced by the fact that, up until the start of the trial, the author had overseen the Telephone and Digital Investigation Unit (TDIU) and Crime Management Services (CMS).

Figure 2: Metropolitan Police Basic Command Units (Met Police 2021a)

Vehicle crime was selected as it is one of the most common volume crimes, and it has one of the lowest detection outcomes. It was also chosen to test the findings of Clark (2021), who included vehicle crime as one of the two crime types tested, albeit as one 'block'. **Figure 3** illustrates the Met Police process for reporting, investigation and screening of vehicle and other volume crime. This is a little complex, but it is important that it is detailed here, as variations in the 'victim experience' through this process had significant effect on the results. Most cases are reported by phone, using 101 or 999, where Met Command and Control (Met CC) take initial details and determine whether a police unit should be despatched. Based on vehicle crime reported during the trial, 87 per cent of cases were initially investigated through the virtual telephone or online process (Met Police 2021b). Crimes reported by telephone are passed by Met CC to the Telephone and Digital Investigation Unit (TDIU) for initial investigation. This is

done through two methods. Some cases are sent as 'live call transfers' whilst the victim is on the line. However, in most instances a case is passed to a TDIU work file for the team to work through. Theft from motor vehicle is one of nine categories of crime where victims will only be called back if further details are required to complete the initial investigation, or it is believed there may be a vulnerability, such as an elderly victim. For theft of motor vehicle, the TDIU will seek to call back the victim. If they cannot be contacted at the first attempt, the victim will be sent contact details for the Crime Management Services (CMS).

28 per cent of cases (again using data from crime reported during this experiment) are reported online. Current policy is that these cases are investigated by CMS. Online reports ensure the details required for initial investigation are provided and so victims are not called back, unless a vulnerability is suspected. Following initial investigation, the TDIU or CMS investigator decides whether to screen in the case for secondary investigation. Based on trial data, 64 per cent of cases are screened out at this stage (Met Police 2021a) and the victim is emailed a 'victim letter'. This provides information required under the Victim's Code (Ministry of Justice 2021), including the crime reference number and links to victim support services and crime prevention advice. Screened in cases are allocated to the local BCU to conduct further investigation. This will in most cases involve a local officer contacting or visiting the victim to further investigate the case.

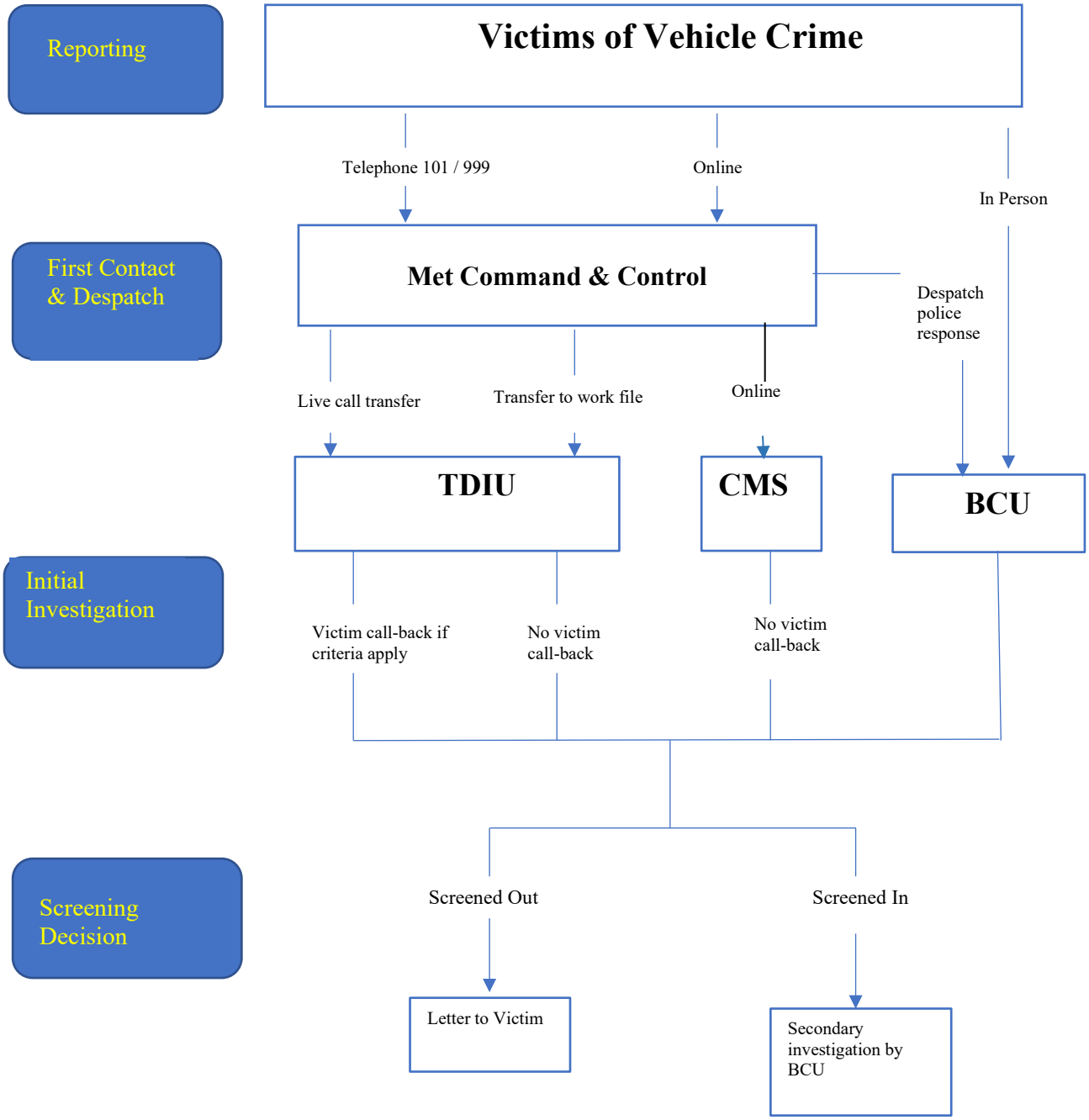

Figure 3: Crime reporting, investigation and screening process

The trial team was comprised of ten police officers and staff from CMS, with a police Sergeant overseeing daily implementation. The team all volunteered and were experienced in dealing with victims of crime over the phone. The size of the team enabled four staff to deliver the interventions Monday to Friday throughout the trial.

Randomisation

The randomisation of participants to treatment and control had to demonstrate that the groups did not differ in any systematic way other than the intervention applied. A pre-requisite to eliminate selection bias was for assignment to be independent of the author and implementation team. The fact that each participant was assigned a unique CRIS reference number presented the opportunity of a ready randomisation process. These numbers are generated sequentially in an automated process. Participants with an 'even' CRIS number were allocated for treatment and those with an 'odd' number were assigned to the control.

Interventions

As described above, most victims of theft of motor vehicle are initially spoken to when they report their crime to Met CC, and then speak again to a TDIU investigator. However, most victims of theft from motor vehicle, and all those reporting either crime online, will not be spoken to again following initial contact. It is not possible to identify what proportion of vehicle crime victims receive no telephone contact, although 37 per cent of TDIU Survey respondents reported this to be the case (MOPaC 2021a). In the minority of cases (approximately 13 per cent), the victim will report the crime in person, either at a police station, in the street, or as a result of a police response. Whatever the reporting route and contact with police, all participants had their crime screened out and were sent a victim letter.

The treatment group only received the independent variable of a reassurance call. Farrington states '*the defining feature of an experiment lies in the control of the independent variable'* (Farrington *et al.* 1986). Control of the interventions was ensured by effective daily supervision, supported by two documents; 'Victim

Satisfaction Experiment – A How To Guide' **(Appendix B**), which explained the aims of the trial and the workflow process, and 'Victim Satisfaction Experiment Reassurance Call Guidance' (**Appendix C**). Whilst there needed to be a degree of consistency for experimental integrity, this had to be done with an authentic voice. As such, the Guidance served as an *aide memoire*, but was not a script to be read *verbatim.* Treatment participants were explained why their case had been screened out, demonstrating 'neutrality' that this was based on the Crime Assessment Principles. They were shown empathy and the importance of reporting the crime was recognised. Accuracy was demonstrated by reading the report before making the call and then checking the facts with the victim. It might also be considered that calling within the reasonable time period of just over 48 hours, texting first and having no time limit for the call all contributed to show respect. Participants were offered crime prevention advice and sent links to relevant websites if they wished to receive this. Some victims welcomed crime prevention advice, whilst others declined it. They were also emailed a leaflet, designed by the Directorate of Media and Communication for the purposes of the trial, highlighting action that the Met is taking on vehicle crime (**Appendix D**).

The experiment builds on the findings of Clark (2021) on implementation issues. That study identified that a low response rate to reassurance calls of 57 per cent was influenced by no 'caller number' being displayed when calling from police phones. For this trial, a text message was sent to every participant shortly before each intervention to advise that police would be calling. Clark (2021) also identified that three call attempts increased responses, but that there were declining returns the more attempts that were made. This trial followed the same process, with some modifications. If the first call was unsuccessful, two further attempts were made that day. If there was still

no response, no further attempts were made. Calls were made Monday to Friday from 0900 to 1900. The daily CRIS search to identify participants was downloaded to a Microsoft Teams spreadsheet. This was accessible only to members of the team. Each was allocated a colour, which they used to record details of their calls (**Appendix B**). This enabled the whole team to see who was working on what report at any time, avoiding duplication. The spreadsheet also recorded the reason for manual exclusion, the three call attempts, corrections to contact details and the length of the call. The completed spreadsheet was sent weekly to the MOPaC Data and Insight team. The final automated exclusion process was then applied before the participants were passed to the market research agency Opinion Research Services (ORS) to send out the online survey later that day.

Outcome Measures

The 'dependent variable' was the level of satisfaction participants expressed in responding to the existing TDIU Survey. This is an online survey sent in a mixed mode of both e-mail and text. Recipients have 10 days to complete it. Despite its name, it surveys victims where the initial investigation is conducted by either the TDIU or CMS. Approximately 60 per cent of respondents have reported by telephone and 40 per cent online (MOPaC 2021a). The use of surveys in experiments presents challenges of design, cost, bias and response rates. Any design needs to maximise responses, whilst minimising measurement and non-response errors (Durand 2015; Bland 2021). The TDIU Survey had the advantage of being a large survey sent to all victims, meaning every participant had an equal chance of completing it. Whilst online surveys have bias against the elderly and the less well-off, it was assumed that few victims of vehicle crime in London have no access to the internet or a mobile phone. This option also

provided independence from the intervention team, a fundamental principle under CONSORT (Schulz *et al.* 2010) and is designed and delivered by survey professionals. Moreover, it is the established survey for measuring satisfaction with the Met Police. This meant that the findings of the trial had direct application to the actual policing context.

A key challenge to overcome was the low response rate to the TDIU Survey. This had declined from 11 per cent in Q1 2020 – 2021 to just 7 per cent in Q4 (MOPaC 2021a). It is speculated that this was influenced by COVID-19, with surveys attracting fewer responses once lockdowns had ended. Aronson and Carlsmith (1968) proclaimed *'most researchers consider anything below 50% to be poor and over 90% to be excellent'*. Measures were put in place aimed at increasing this response rate. Firstly, at an additional cost of £4,520 (met by MOPaC), the survey was sent out within 7 days of the intervention, as opposed to 6 to 12 weeks later, as would normally be the case. It was felt that greater proximity between the crime, intervention and survey would make participants more inclined to complete it, and have better recollection of their experience. Secondly, was to send a reminder to complete the survey four days later. One study showed a 28 per cent response rate could be increased to 57 per cent with two follow-up e-mails (Schonlau *et al.* 2002). Thirdly, the intervention team ensured that e-mail addresses for treatment participants were correct so that they could receive the survey. Finally, the team actively encouraged treatment participants to complete the survey.

A closer look at the survey instrument

The survey uses structured 3 and 7-point Likert scale questions (**Appendix E**). Satisfaction is noted by the respondent being 'completely', 'mainly' or 'fairly satisfied'.

Overall satisfaction is measured from the response to the last question, which asks, *'Taking the whole experience into account how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the service you received?'* Limited questionnaires appeal because they are simple to understand and easy to complete (Merry *et al.* 2011), but they provide a limited picture. Victims have more satisfaction with some elements of their reporting experience than others. This survey is comprised of 25 questions for victims reporting by telephone and 15 for those reporting online. These provided opportunity to investigate drivers and barriers that sit behind satisfaction. Using this survey had clear advantage over designing a new one, with pitfalls of ambiguous or loaded questions, duplications and unmeasured concepts. It also includes questions on age, gender, ethnicity, disability and sexuality, meaning that reliable data (often not accurately recorded in crime reports) for secondary analyses against demographic variables could be readily obtained. Finally, the survey addresses legal risks, with mechanisms in place to uphold data privacy.

Sample Size

There is no definitive answer as to the right sample size, which is determined by the size of the 'sampling error' rather than population size. The larger the sample size, the smaller this error. Established practice accepts probabilities of 0.05 or less as being statistically significant and so a reliable basis from which to draw conclusions (Wolf *et al.* 2016). This was mainly of relevance for the sub-group analyses, which would reduce the number of eligible participants within each of these groups. The sample size for this trial was determined by seeking to achieve the maximum number of participants within the constraints of time and resources. The period of three months was dictated by the time available for research. As previously described, the pilot identified that each member of the team could realistically conduct 20 calls in a working day, making 80

calls a day realistic and a potential total sample of 8,000 achievable within the study period.

Blinding

Measures to ensure participants are unaware they are participating in a trial are integral to many experiments. 'Blinding' participants reduces the risk that responses are influenced by this knowledge, confounding the results. In some designs, particularly in the field of medicine, there is 'double-blinding' so that those delivering the treatment are also unaware. This trial ensured 'blinding' of the participants, who were not informed that the calls or the survey were part of an experiment. The survey is of course an 'obtrusive instrument' and the respondents knew their views would be analysed, making knowledge of the experiment less of a bias threat (Weisburd *et al.* 2001). Clark (2021) briefed his team that the survey was an 'initiative' rather than an experiment to assess victim satisfaction. The threat of experimenter bias was more relevant to that trial, as the team also undertook the telephone survey. In this trial there was negligible bias risk because the team had no contact with control participants. As such, there was limited value in 'blinding' them. In fact, there was much more to be gained by motivating the team with knowledge that they were part of an experiment to use evidence-based policing to inform the Met's strategy on victim satisfaction. MOPaC and ORS staff were fully aware of the experiment. Again, there was no real value in 'double blinding' as the survey was generated in an automated process, with participants left to respond as they wished.

Changes to Methodology

Two changes were introduced to the original methodology. Firstly, the team initially included all vehicle crime in the sample, rather than just theft of motor vehicle and theft

from motor vehicle. Three weeks into the experiment it was established these other crimes are excluded from survey eligibility and they were added to the pre-intervention exclusion criteria. Secondly, the criteria that reports were screened out within 48 hours of reporting was challenged by rising crime demand in November 2021. This created a backlog in the investigation and screening process, meaning an insufficient number of reports to attain the daily target of 160 participants. A modification was made to the CRIS search to expand this period to 72 hours. However, this had little impact, as screening was often being delayed by several days. It was judged that extending the parameter still further risked impacting on the experimental model as it would mean interventions being made several days, rather than 48 hours after, the report. Instead, the experiment proceeded using two methods in parallel to generate more reports. The 48-hour parameter continued as before and, when those reports had been completed for the day, the team worked on the initial investigation and screening of crimes reported online, starting with the most recent. This did however mean that the numbers of reports being included in the sample was reduced from the original rate. Time spent completing the initial investigation and screening decision of both control and treatment reports, rather than just delivering reassurance calls, necessarily impacted on capacity.

Statistical Methods

Analyses were conducted on the survey responses by means of descriptive analyses of the response numbers (n). Chi-Square tests were applied to determine where differences were statistically significant at the usual 0.05 alpha level.

Chapter 3: Results

This chapter describes the process through which the participants were managed through the trial, including exclusions and other loses to the experiment. Descriptive analyses provide interpretation of the results. These consider the overall effect of the intervention on satisfaction, a comparison of telephone and online reporting and vehicle crime types, specific questions about the reporting experience, victim demographics and the duration of the call. Chi-Square tests were completed in respect of all analysed variables to indicate statistical significance.

Participant flow

The flow of the participants through the trial process can be described in six stages. This is illustrated in the CONSORT flow diagram (**Figure 6**).

Selection: Participants were initially selected based on the automated CRIS search. During the trial, 38,378 vehicle crimes were reported in London (Met Police 2021b). Crimes other than theft of motor vehicle and theft from motor vehicle were excluded, reducing potential participants to 24,797. The automated CRIS search then excluded screened in crime, screened out but not within the 48-hours and committed on SW BCU, reducing participants to a sample of 9,384; 4,671 for treatment and 4,713 for control. There was then a further process of exclusions processed manually by the team. This excluded more participants from the treatment group (1,018) than the control (801).

Randomisation: Participants were then randomised to the treatment and control groups. Participants with an even crime report number were allocated for treatment (3,653), whilst those with an odd number went into the control (3,912).

Intervention: Three attempts were made to call participants. There were a total of 2,744 interventions delivered during the trial. There was no response from 307 participants, representing a 90 per cent response rate (**Figure 4**). There were a total of 660 treatment participants who the team did not get around to calling. These both remained in the treatment group under the intention to treat. There were 17 participants whose contact details could not be confirmed. These were excluded as ineligible for the survey. The leaflet explaining what the Met is doing about vehicle crime (**Appendix D**) was sent to 1,332 treatment participants.

Secondary Exclusion: Participants were sent weekly to MOPaC. This totalled 3,751 treatment and 4,014 control. A final automated exclusion process was conducted to ensure all participants were eligible for the survey. This excluded a further 315 participants from the treatment group and 466 from control. The higher number in the control was because more exclusions had already been applied to the treatment group in the manual process. Total exclusion rates were 35 per cent for treatment and 34 per cent for control (**Table II**):

Table II: Trial exclusion rates

	Mean	Maximum	Minimum
Treatment	35%	60%	12%
Control	34%	46%	16%
T & C	34.5%	51%	14%

Survey: The online survey was sent by email and text to all participants within 7 days of the intervention. 3,436 were sent to treatment participants and 3,556 to the control.

Survey Response: There were 260 survey responses from the treatment group and 242 from the control.

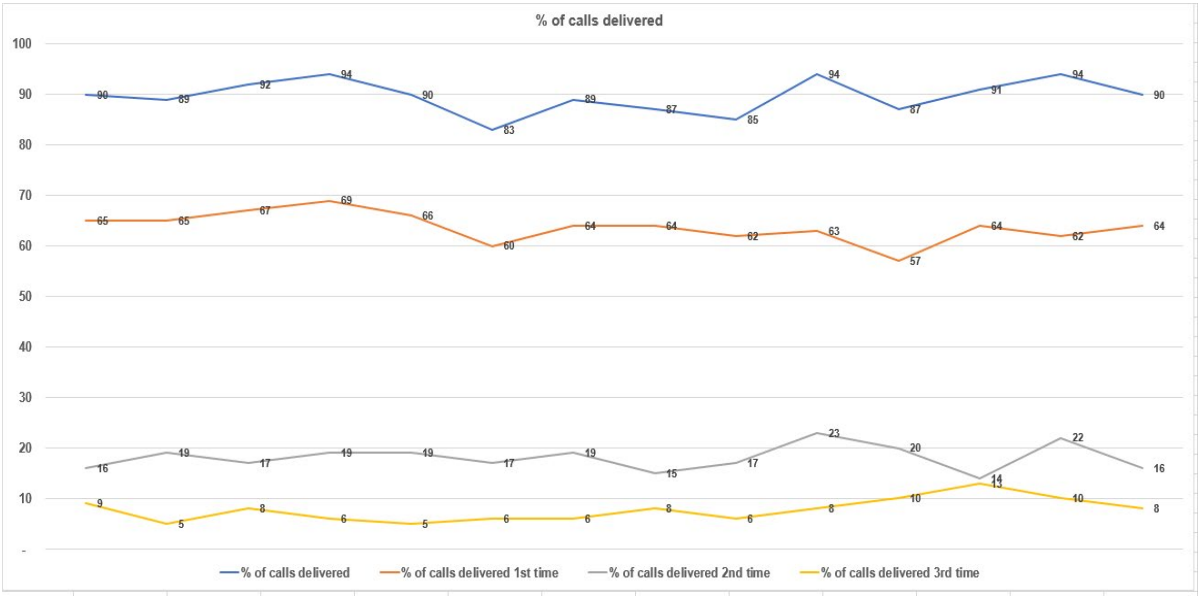

Figure 4: Response rates to reassurance calls

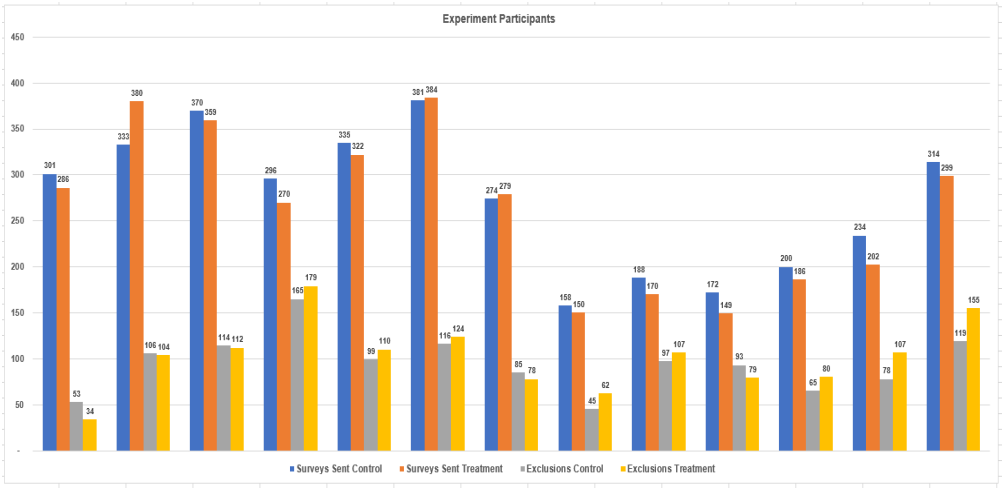

Figure 5: Participants excluded and sent for survey

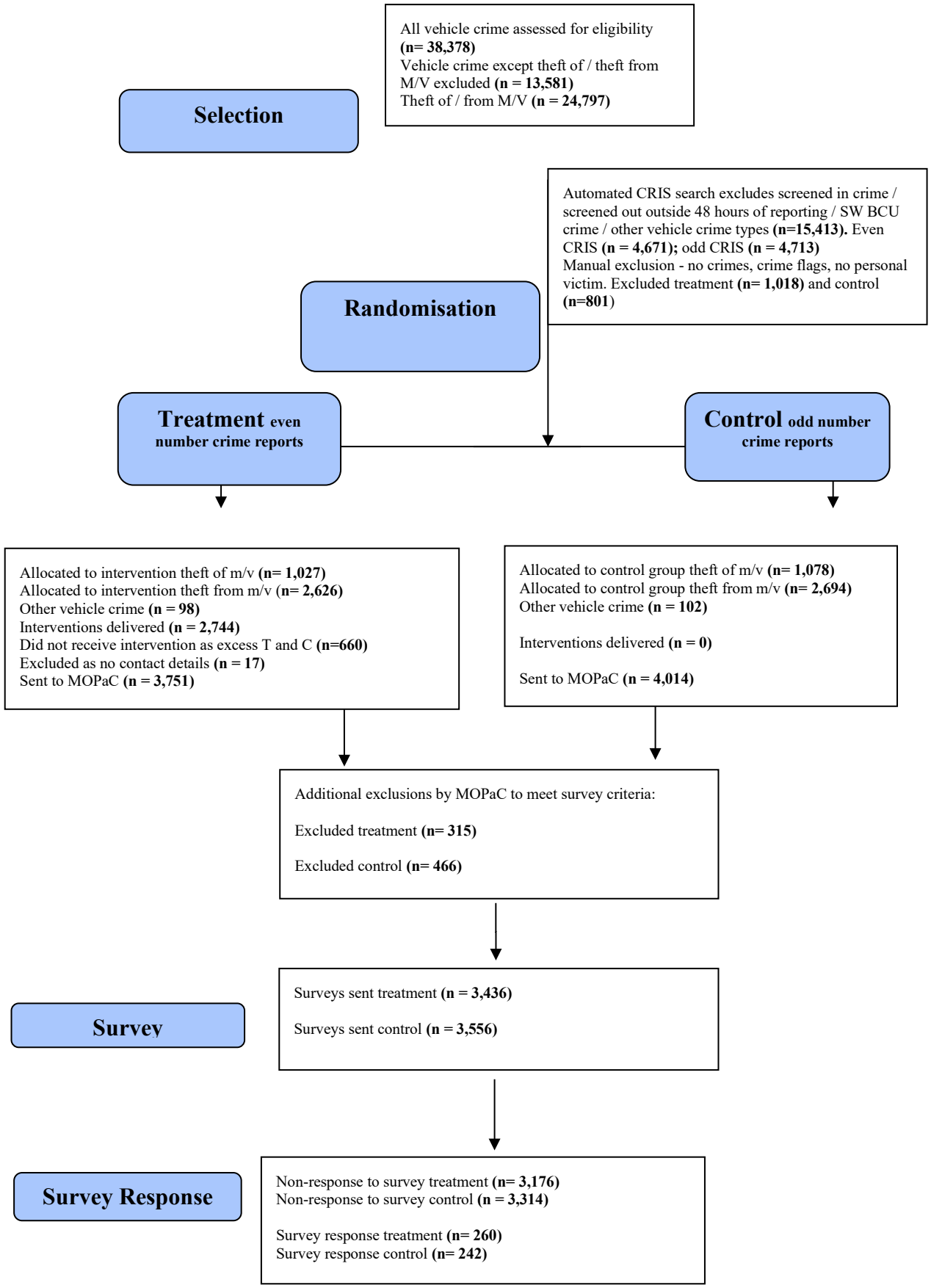

Figure 6: CONSORT flow diagram

Overall comparison

62 per cent of the treatment group expressed overall satisfaction. This compared to 40 per cent of the control. This represents a 22 percentage point (or 55 per cent) improvement from the intervention.

Telephone *vs*. online reporting

Figure 7 illustrates the comparison of satisfaction between participants who reported by telephone, and those who reported online, also compared to satisfaction trends for the previous 20 months. It is seen that there is significantly more satisfaction in the treatment group than in the control for both reporting methods. However, there is a far greater increase of 51 percentage points (or 181 per cent) more satisfaction expressed by participants reporting online, compared to a 12 percentage point (25 per cent) increase for telephone reporters.

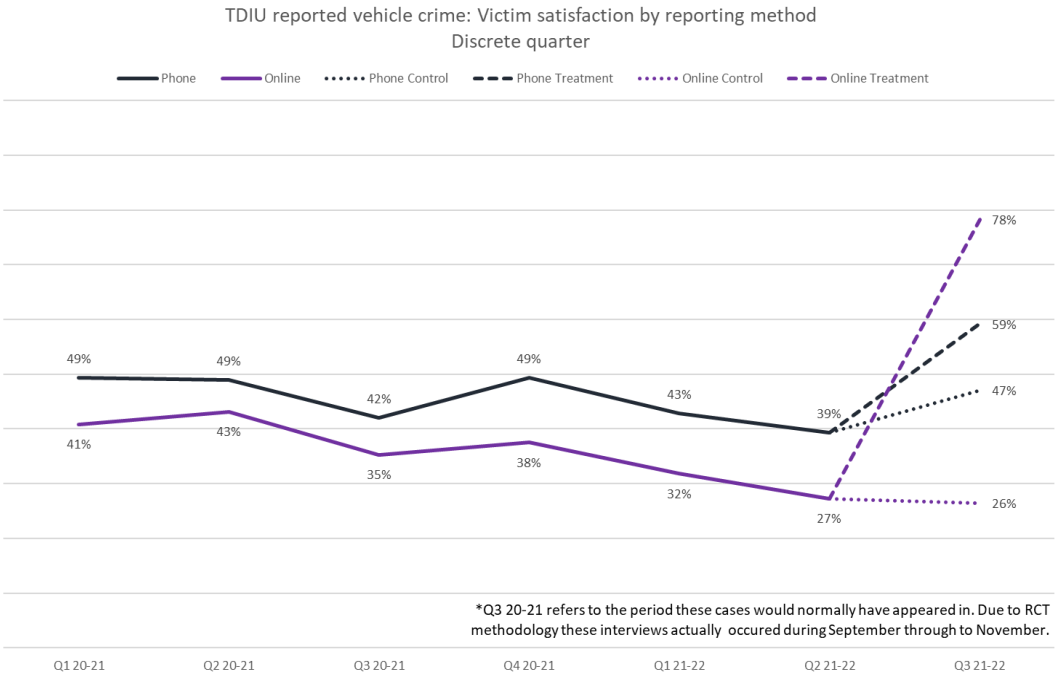

Figure 7: Victim satisfaction telephone *vs*. online reporting (MOPaC 2021b)

Figure 8 illustrates the levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction expressed by the treatment and control respondents. For victims reporting by telephone there is almost no difference between treatment and control in the 'completely' and 'very satisfied' categories. There is however a 12 percentage point increase in the 'fairly satisfied' category. This contrasts sharply with those reporting online, where there is a 29 percentage point increase in the 'completely satisfied' category. Online reporters also expressed 16 more percentage points in the 'very satisfied' category, but only 7 more points as 'fairly satisfied'. The results indicate that victims who report vehicle crime by telephone or online are more satisfied if they receive a reassurance call. They also show that the effect size is much greater among those who report their crime online, both in terms of being satisfied and the level of their satisfaction.

Other survey questions

The survey asked partcipants specific questions about their reporting experience. Telephone reporters were asked additional questions based on the greater likelihood that they will have spoken to a TDIU investigator (**Annex E**). **Table III** illustrates the responses to these questions, comparing telephone and online respondents. It highlights (in green) where the effect is satistically signicant based on Chi-Square tests ($p = 0.05$). The treatment and control for those reporting online show significant differences in 8 of the 11 questions. In contrast, for those reporting by telephone there is only statisically significant difference in 4 of the 15 questions, indicating a narrower impact.

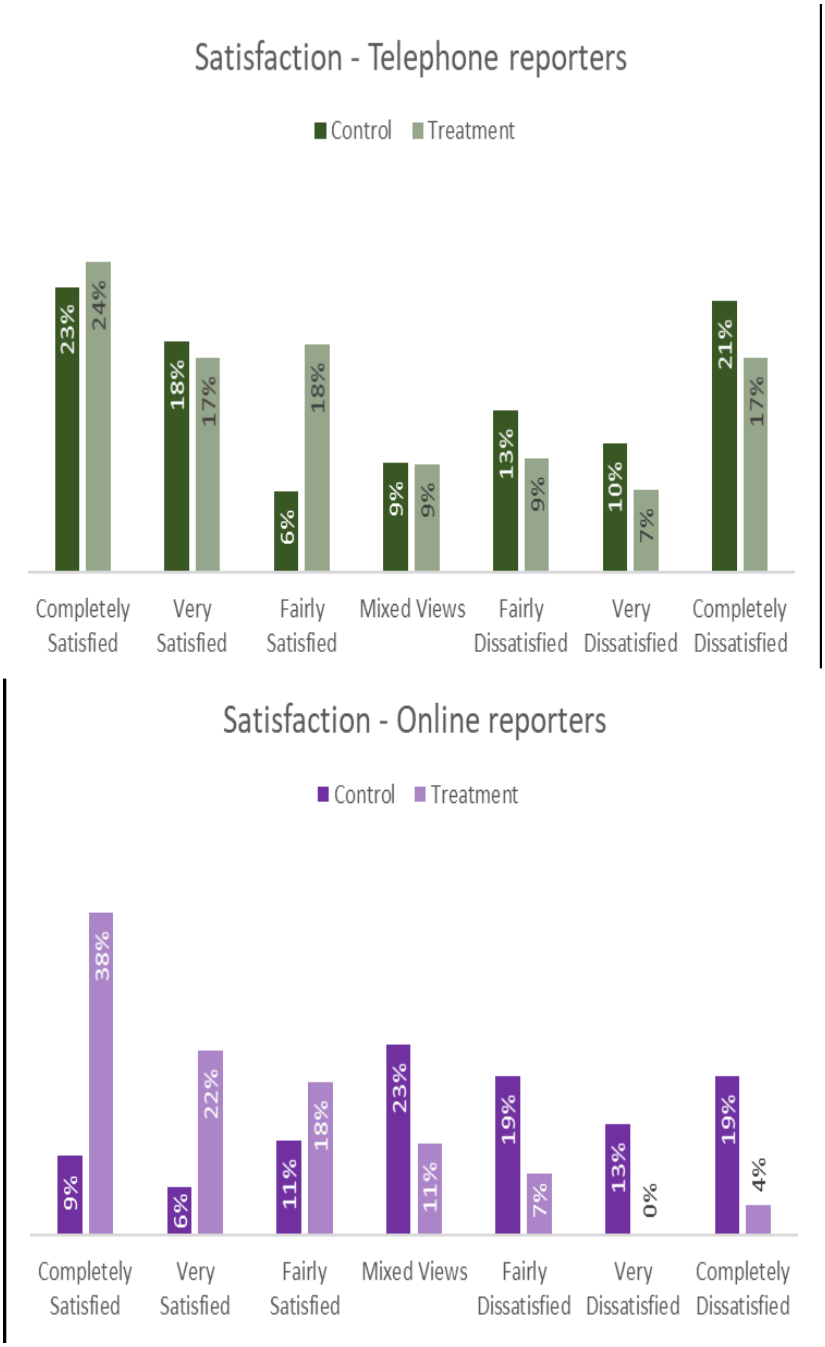

Figure 8: Levels of victim satisfaction telephone *vs.* online reporting (MOPaC 2021b)

Table III: Victim satisfaction *vs.* reporting experience

	Control	Treatment	Difference	P Value (Sig.)
Provided with a crime reference number	98%	99%	1.0%	0.587
Given an explanation of what would happen and why	78%	85%	7.0%	0.079
Offered crime prevention advice	50%	53%	3.0%	0.289
Informed case was closed (if crime screened out)	70%	76%	6.0%	0.108
Sent or provided with a Victim Leaflet	40%	54%	14.0%	0.006
Were you made aware of the Victim Code	32%	33%	1.0%	0.463
Offered the services of LVWS	33%	37%	4.0%	0.261
During the report the operator communicated clearly	68%	78%	10.0%	0.089
During the report the operator showed empathy	54%	69%	15.0%	0.001
During the report the operator took the matter seriously	56%	67%	11.0%	0.105
During the report the operator reassured you	41%	53%	12.0%	0.053*
Given an opportunity to talk about the impact of the offence	23%	36%	13.0%	0.024
The reporting process met expectations	66%	77%	11.3%	0.075
Would report a similar incident to the police	84%	87%	3.0%	0.298
View of MPS improved	16%	27%	11.0%	0.020

	Control	Treatment	Difference	P Value (Sig.)
Received further contact other than email/letter	24%	93%	69.0%	0.000
Provided with a crime reference number	96%	95%	-1.0%	0.527
Given an explanation of what would happen and why	55%	83%	28.0%	0.002
Offered crime prevention advice	33%	72%	39.0%	0.000
Informed case was closed (if crime screened out)	74%	92%	18.0%	0.010
Sent or provided with a Victim Leaflet	43%	71%	28.0%	0.007
Were you made aware of the Victim Code	28%	64%	36.0%	0.001
Offered the services of LVWS	46%	41%	-5.0%	0.387
The reporting process met expectations	72%	85%	13.4%	0.000
Would report a similar incident to the police	85%	96%	11.0%	0.055*
View of MPS improved	8%	36%	28.0%	0.000

Vehicle crime type

Satisfaction was measured across the two vehicle crime types. Theft from motor vehicle is more common than theft of motor vehicle and this was reflected in their respective sample sizes at intervention of 5,460 and 2,105. This found that satisfaction from the treatment increased for victims of both vehicle crime types (**Figure 9**). There was more satisfaction for victims of theft from motor vehicle than theft of motor vehicle. For online reporters, theft from motor vehicle showed 53 percentage points more satisfaction following the treatment, whilst victims of theft of motor vehicle showed 45

more points. For those reporting by telephone, victims of theft from motor vehicle showed 16 percentage points more satisfaction, compared to 7 more points for theft of motor vehicle. The latter difference was not statistically significant (p value = 0.446) (**Table IV**).

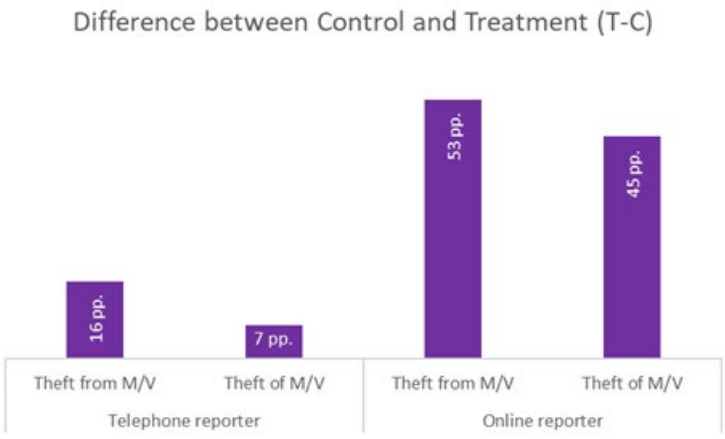

Figure 9: Victim satisfaction theft of motor vehicle *vs.* theft from motor vehicle (MOPaC 2021b)

Table IV: Statistical signifcance of differences in vehicle crime type satisfaction (MOPaC 2021b)

		Difference between Control and Treatment (T-C)	P Value (Sig.)
Telephone reporter	Theft from M/V	16%	0.009
	Theft of M/V	7%	0.446
Online reporter	Theft from M/V	53%	0.001
	Theft of M/V	45%	0.033

Victim demographics

Satisfaction was next compared to demographic characteristics of age, gender, ethinicity, disability and sexuality to identify any concentration of effect (**Table V**). Due to the low base sizes for these sub-groups, telephone and online reporters are combined. Sub-group sizes of less than 30 participants are highlighted (yellow). The differences of satisfaction between the treatment and control are satistically significant

based on Chi-Square testing in 10 of the 16 sub-groups (highlighted green, with * indicating differences being close to significant).

Table V: Victim satisfaction *vs.* demographic charcteristics

	Control	Treatment	Difference	P Value (Sig.)
White British	47%	64%	16.6%	0.012
White Other	53%	72%	19.1%	0.07*
Black	42%	75%	32.9%	0.028
Asian	32%	66%	33.2%	0.006
Other	25%	44%	18.8%	0.371
16-34	28%	53%	25.2%	0.014
35-44	35%	56%	21.8%	0.025
45-54	37%	65%	28.6%	0.005
55-64	46%	64%	17.4%	0.110
65plus	69%	81%	12.1%	0.175
Female	49%	73%	23.7%	0.001
Male	40%	59%	18.5%	0.001
Has disability	46%	72%	26.5%	0.06*
No disability	42%	62%	20.8%	0.001
LGBT+	40%	57%	17.1%	0.486
Not LGBT+	46%	65%	19.0%	0.001

Low base size (below 30 for Control and/or Treatment group)

Satisfaction *vs.* duration of reassurance call

To provide sufficent size for comparison, the lengths of the calls were categorised as either '1 to 5 minutes' and '6 minutes or more.' Overall satisfaction for telephone reporters was 78 per cent if the call was '1 to 5 minutes', compared to 51 per cent if the call was longer. Chi-Square testing confirms this difference as statistically significant (0.003). However, there was no statistical significance in the difference for online reporters (0.864), with 73 per cent being satisfied when a call was '1 to 5 minutes', compared to 77 per cent if it was longer.

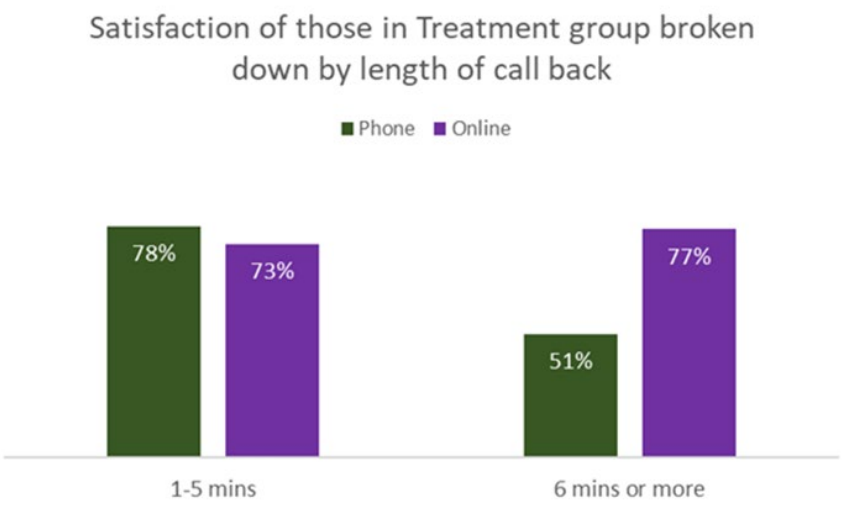

Figure 10: Victim satisfaction *vs.* length of reassurance call

Treatment *vs.* control demographic and other features

The low survey response meant there was risk of the results being non-random and systematically biased. Analyses was undertaken to compare the demographic characteristics and other features of participants in the treatment and control groups (**Table VI**). No statistically significant differences were found, indicating that the types of people responding to the survey were the same across both groups.

Table VI: Treatment *vs.* control demographic and other feature comparison (MOPaC 2021b)

		Control	Treatment
Ethnicity	White British	47%	53%
	White Other	23%	15%
	Black	9%	10%
	Asian	18%	14%
	Other	4%	7%
Age	16-34	17%	24%
	35-44	25%	20%
	45-54	21%	20%
	55-64	17%	18%
	65plus	21%	19%
Gender	Female	40%	38%
	Male	60%	61%
Disability	Yes	10%	11%
	No	90%	90%
LGBT+	Yes	95%	97%
	No	6%	3%
Self-assessed impact of crime	1-9 out of 10	78%	78%
	10 out of 10	22%	22%
Repeat victimisation	Not repeat	83%	78%
	Repeat	17%	22%
How dealt with (telephone reporters only)	Entirely on phone	82%	87%
	Visit	18%	13%
Content to be dealt with entirely on phone (telephone reporters dealt with on phone only)	Yes	78%	80%
	No	22%	20%
Direct transfer from Met CC (telephone reporters only)	Yes	65%	59%
	No	35%	41%
Estimate of time spent REPORTING crime (telephone reporters only)	0 to 5 mins	28%	25%
	6 to 10 mins	29%	37%
	11 to 15 mins	17%	15%
	20 mins or more	25%	22%
Screening decision	In	2%	4%
	Out	98%	96%
Crime status	Undetected	100%	100%

Further analyses was done to compare demographic features of the survey respondents with those to whom the survey was sent and to the wider population of all vehicle crime victims in 2021 (Met Police 2022). **Table VII** illustrates that, notwithstanding some slight variations, there was a high degree of consistency. This indicates that survey respondents were broadly representative of the sample group, which in turn was representative of the population.

Table VII Demographics for surveys sent, surveys received and all victims

Demographic Feature		Vehicle Crime Victims 2021	Surveys Sent		Surveys Received	
			T	C	T	C
Gender	Male	66%	70%	69%	61%	60%
	Female	44%	30%	31%	38%	40%
Age	16 - 34	38%	35%	34%	24%	17%
	35 - 44	25%	26%	26%	20%	25%
	45 - 54	20%	19%	20%	20%	21%
	55 - 64	13%	12%	12%	18%	17%
	65 +	8%	8%	8%	19%	21%
Ethnicity	White	53%	61%	58%	69%	60%
	BAME	46%	39%	42%	31%	40%

Chapter 4: Discussion

This chapter discusses the trial results and offers explanations for differences across the variables tested. It commences with the overall findings on the effect of reassurance calls on satisfaction and then breaks the results down to provide interpretation on the wide differences between telephone and online reporters and the lesser differences identified in vehicle crime type and victim demographics. It further explores satisfaction relative to the reporting experience, including the length of the intervention. There then follows discussion on the strengths and limitations of the trial, particularly the low survey response. There is specific comparison with the results of Clark *et al.* (2022), to address the divergent findings of the two trials. It highlights the need to further develop this field of research, focusing on other crime types and methods of intervention. Finally, it presents recommendations to reverse the decline in victim satisfaction.

Discussion of findings

The headline result of the trial is that it very clearly supports the hypothesis that procedural justice delivered by telephone increases victim satisfaction. The 62 per cent satisfaction rate in the treatment group demonstrates the significant impact to be derived from a simple phone call to the victim. The 40 per cent satisfaction for the control is consistent with recent 37 per cent satisfaction for vehicle crime in the TDIU survey (**Table I**). The surprising result, not tested in previous research, is the dramatic 51 percentage point increase for victims reporting online, compared to the 12 point increase for those reporting by telephone. In addition, *'completely satisfied'* was the modal response (box ticked most frequently) for the online reporters, whilst telephone

satisfaction was driven by more respondents being *'fairly satisfied.'* There are likely several factors at play here, which require detailed discussion.

Telephone *vs.* online reporting The TDIU Survey identifies that those reporting online are in general 10 percentage points less satisfied than those reporting by telephone (MOPaC 2021a). It has been explained that there is usually no telephone interaction with victims reporting online. This experience is different to those reporting by telephone. All victims will at least speak to a Met CC operator. Some will then talk to a TDIU investigator, where more time is taken to go through their crime and complete the investigation. Whilst there is some variation in contact with police depending on the vehicle crime type and whether they are referred to TDIU as a 'live call transfer', those reporting by telephone will experience one or more 'doses' of procedural justice (Bradford *et al*. 2009a). The telephone conversation will provide them with a 'voice' and an opportunity to be listened to by the police operator or investigator and to receive crime prevention advice and take steps to make sure it does not happen again. They will likely feel they have 'standing' as they are treated with dignity and respect. Police also have the opportunity to demonstrate 'neutrality' if time is taken to explain the reasons for the screening decision. In contrast, victims reporting online are deprived of this engagement and so receive a very limited dose of procedural justice. The results show that the impact of positive 'expectancy disconfirmation' (Oliver 1981), with expectations exceeded, is much stronger among victims (mainly online reporters) who have received negligible procedural justice in their reporting experience prior to the reassurance call, than those (mainly telephone reporters) who have at least received some. There was a common theme for online participants expressing that they were 'pleasantly surprised' by the call. The telephone *versus* online difference also implies

a ‘law of diminishing returns’ for procedural justice, where it will initially have significant effect, and then fade with further doses.

To add to this complexity, the difference is also likely influenced by variations in the recovery from the sharp decline in August 2021 (**Figure 1**), when satisfaction for telephone and online reporters slipped to all-time lows of 37 and 30 per cent respectively. **Figure 11** illustrates analyses by MOPaC (2021a) indicating a strong correlation between this decline and a combination of Met CC staff abstractions for summer leave, rising demands (with the seasonal spike accentuated by the end of COVID-19 lockdown), resulting in increased backlogs in the TDIU. This meant that, where victims were called back, this would be several days after their report. This provides a poor sense of procedural justice and a concurrent decline in satisfaction. By the time of this trial, the backlog had been reduced (with overtime payment to staff), and victim satisfaction was in an upward trajectory, with control satisfaction rising to 47 per cent (**Figure 7**). In contrast, online reporting satisfaction remained plateaued. This likely reduced the impact of the intervention on telephone reporting satisfaction that might have been observed had the experiment commenced earlier in the summer.

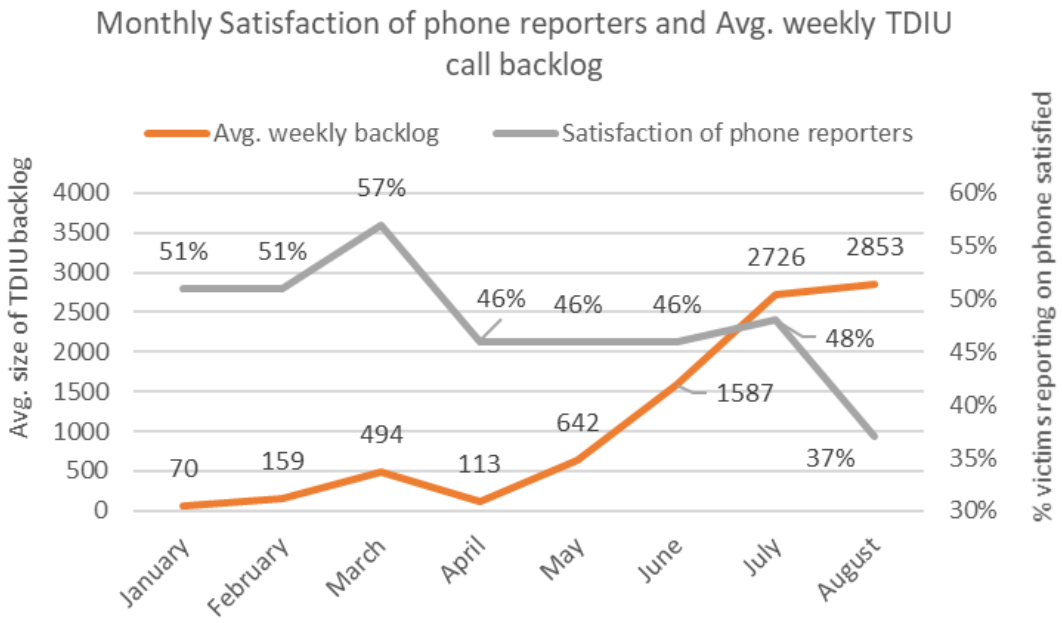

Figure 11: Victim satisfaction *vs.* TDIU backlog (MOPaC 2021a)

Trust and confidence Responses to the question '*Based on the reporting of this incident have your views of the Metropolitan Police Service 1. Stayed the same 2. Improved 3. Got worse 4. Don't know'* require specific discussion. This question is about trust and confidence. Survey respondents stating their view of the police had improved as a result of the reporting process declined from 20 per cent in Q3 2020 – 2021 to 15 per cent in Q2 2021 – 2022 (MOPaC 2021a). As noted earlier, the literature identifies that research is divided on the potential of police contact to improve trust and confidence. Skogan declared contact will only serve to undermine trust (Skogan 2006; Skogan 2012). Other studies have argued that there may be a positive impact when procedural justice is applied (Bradford *et al.* 2009b; Merry *et al.* 2011). The findings from this experiment go beyond the cautious optimism of the latter to identify a significant increase in victims having an improved view of the Met Police. Again, this is demonstrated more markedly amongst victims reporting online, where 36 per cent of the treatment group reported their view had improved, compared to 8 per cent in the

control. For those reporting by telephone, the improved view was less strong, although still significant, accounting for 27 per cent of treatment respondents, compared to 16 per cent in the control. This wider effect of the treatment may be further amplified by the vicarious impact it has on family and friends of the victim (Hohl *et al.* 2010). Whilst victim satisfaction may not be the panacea for trust and confidence, it does appear to be a contributing factor.

Reporting experience An examination of responses to other survey questions identifies statistically significant increased positive responses for online reporters who received the treatment for almost all questions (**Table III**). However, this is not the case for those reporting by telephone, where the differences are statistically significant for only four questions. There were bigger differences among telephone reporters on the procedural justice-focused questions of being shown empathy and being able to talk about the incident. However, other related questions on being given an explanation, taken seriously and reassured were not statistically significant. The results may also be influenced by the small base size which, with a greater number of respondents, might have shown statistically significant differences. The more postive response on receiving the 'victim leaflet' requires explanation. A link to the leaflet, which provides information on crime prevention and victim support, is contained within the victim letter and is sent to all victims. It is likely that respondents were confusing the leaflet with the one explaining what the Met is doing to tackle vehicle crime (**Appendix D**) . The statistically significant differences for online reporters reflect the bigger effect seen in their satisfaction.

Victim demographics Reassurance calls resulted in more satisfaction across the demographic variables of age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality and disability (**Table IV**).

There were some differences in this effect. Satisfaction for 'White British' in the treatment group increased by 16.6 percentage points, but there were higher increases of 32.9 and 33.2 percentage points for 'Black' and 'Asian' participants. The over-65 age group showed a 12.1 percentage point increase, which was lower than for other age ranges. In contrast to Clark (2021), females were more satisfied (73 percent) than males (59 per cent). However, care must be taken to avoid over-extrapolation of these results. As previously indicated, some of these sub-groups have low base sizes. The groups where the effect of the intervention appears less are also those who usually express more satisfaction (MOPaC 2021a). This indicates more of a levelling effect, rather than one group being more satisfied than another. This does not necessarily mean that demography has no effect. Rather, it suggests that victims are highly individualistic. They may be influenced by their characteristics, but the relative importance of these will vary and are combined with other factors, such as where they live.

Vehicle crime type The relative satisfaction of victims of theft of motor vehicle and theft from motor vehicle was examined. It was important to test the finding of Clark (2021) that victims of cycle theft were more satisfied by a reassurance call, but there was 'negligible effect' for vehicle crime. Clark (2021) concluded this was because vehicle crime victims suffered more financial loss. In essence, this postulates the argument that procedural justice has greater effect where there has been less loss to the victim, but when the loss is greater, satisfaction is based more on outcomes. However, by categorising vehicle crime as one 'block', the Clark (2021) trial was unable to identify potential different effects for the two vehicle crime types. This produces a potential 'ecological fallacy' (Neuman and Weigand 2000) of concluding there is more loss from low value property being stolen from a vehicle when compared to cycle theft,

which can include very expensive cycles. In contrast, this study identified increased satisfaction for victims of both vehicle crime types following treatment, but that this was greater for theft from motor vehicle (53 percentage points more satisfaction for online and 16 more points for telephone), than for theft of motor vehicle (45 and 7 percentage points respectively). Three reasons for this variation are offered. Firstly, as discussed above, there is a difference in the reporting experience for the two crime types. There will have been an attempt to call back victims who have had their vehicle stolen if they reported by telephone, although not if reported online. If a victim had property stolen from their vehicle, it is unlikely they would have had a call back, and again would not if they reported online. In short, theft of motor vehicle victims were more likely to have received a dose of procedural justice prior to the treatment and so, following the argument previously articulated, their potential to be more satisfied by a reassurance call is reduced. Secondly, there probably is an effect caused by crime type. In general, victims who have had property taken from their car will have suffered less loss than those who have had their entire vehicle taken. Thirdly, as there are less cases of theft of motor vehicle, the base sizes in the experiment were relatively low (65 in treatment survey responses and 57 in the control), limiting the differences from which to draw conclusions. In essence, there probably is less satisfaction from procedural justice when greater loss is experienced, but this is also influenced by the doses of procedural justice that the victim has already received, and it is not possible to quantify these two variables.

Duration of the reassurance call Comparison of satisfaction and the duration of the call (**Figure 10**) revealed statistically significant less satisfaction for telephone reporters if the call went on for more than 6 minutes. For online reporters, satisfaction

did not show significant change based on the length of the call. A reasonable interpretation of this is that telephone reporters are grateful to receive a call but, as they will already have spoken to police once (and perhaps twice), their satisfaction increase is less pronounced and more likely to fade. In contrast, online reporters are receiving their procedural justice in one dose and their satisfaction is sustained for a longer period. As with the overall difference of telephone and online satisfaction, this implies that procedural justice is finite and will only go so far in delivering benefits.

Trial strengths

The strengths of experimental research are based on their internal and external validity. The experimenter is challenged by a conundrum that controls to strengthen internal validity against spurious factors can constrain its application to wider settings (Weisburd *et al.* 2001). Challenges to both validities cannot be totally ruled out and the strengths of a trial are based rather on the degree to which this can be achieved. The conditions of this study lent themselves well to an RCT in terms of design and resources. A large sample size was achieved and, whilst large numbers can be a challenge to control, this was addressed by a clear participant flow through the experimental process. If there had been more time and resources, there is no reason why the numbers could not have been doubled or more. The trial was also ethical and legal, i.e. there was no risk of harm or depriving normal statutory service to participants**.**

Randomisation procedure Risks of bias in randomisation are usually presented when allocation is carried out by the treatment delivery team. This trial used an automated process, outside the control of the team. There was no need to separate the team into treatment and control as they only had contact with (and potential influence on) the

treatment group. There is precedent for using existing unique reference numbers to determine random assignment. Random digit dialling has long been used to select respondents in telephone surveys (Aronson and Carlsmith 1968). In an experiment on street drugs enforcement, odd and even minute times that drug dealers were stopped were used to determine their assignment (Magnusen 2020). A key requirement for any experiment is that, once assigned, participants remain in their allocated group. Diffusion from one group to another will undermine the results. This risk usually occurs where participants have an element of 'free will' to cross from one group to the other, or where there is room for error in the randomisation process. In this trial there was no opportunity for participants to remove themselves from their assigned group and the simplicity of the assignment avoided any mistakes.

Dedicated team The selection, training, management and support of the trial team was key to ensuring consistent interventions and accurate data recording. Sherman emphasises the importance of leading an experimental team in the 'tracking' element of the 'Three T' approach (Sherman 2013), whilst Fixsen notes that *'experiments are not self-implementing'* (Fixsen *et al.* 2005). The fact that the team was comprised of volunteers meant that they had interest and motivation to be part of the experiment, and these staff remained consistent throughout the trial. Of specific note was the role of a dedicated police Sergeant, who personally undertook the daily CRIS search and maintained effective overview of implementation throughout. This option was preferable to nominating officers, as done by Clark (2021). Aronson and Carlsmith (1968) point out that *'one of the most common mistakes of the novice experimenter makes is to present his instructions too briefly'* and comprehensive and continuous briefings were essential. The experiment was supported by two documents which outlined the trial process and provided an *aide memoire* for the intervention

(**Appendices B and C**). Moreover, the team were involved in their drafting. The team came together in a fortnightly MS Teams meeting, also including the author and MOPaC lead analyst, to be briefed and to feedback their experiences. This followed the 'train, track and feedback' principles identified in another victim contact trial (Slothower *et al.* 2015) and avoided implementation challenges evident in much police fieldwork. The strength of a team of enthusiastic volunteers does of course present a potential 'Hawthorne effect' of producing better procedural justice than would be achieved if replicated outside the experimental setting (Hagan 2014). This needs to be considered in any wider operationalisation.

Value of pilots The two-day pilot enabled the model to be tested without impacting on the experiment and it informed two elements of the design. Firstly, the daily CRIS search provided a realistic sample size to be worked through. Secondly, the pilot demonstrated that sending a text achieved a 64 per cent response rate to the first call and so sending a text before the first call was implemented. This high rate of responses to the reassurance calls, 90 per percent with three call attempts, was consistent throughout the course of the trial (**Appendix G**). It was also evident that, whilst a second and third call nudged up responses by a further 16 and 8 percentage points respectively, there were declining returns (**Figure 4**). This suggests that, when seeking to maximise responses with limited resources, three call attempts may be optimal. The use of text messages is a simple and obvious method that should be used by future experimenters.

Survey design The strength of the survey design was that it enabled measurement of effect across a multitude of variables. The rationale for selecting this instrument is detailed in Methods. This describes the advantages of it being independent of the trial

team and professionally designed and delivered. The fact that it was online meant it was relatively cheap and simple to administer and there was no unintended interference placed on respondents.

Trial limitations

Survey response rate There is a dichotomy in the use of surveys in that, the stronger the model is, the lower the likely response rate. Self-selection in survey responses also creates bias in favour of those who choose to complete it, who may not be identical to those who do not. This was exacerbated by a very low response rate of 7.15 per cent. This increased the margin of error that respondents may not represent the population and challenges 'statistical conclusion validity'. However, low response rates are not without precedent. A survey of victims of violent crime in Missouri achieved an 8.8 per cent response rate (Avery *et al.* 2020). It also compares to the declining response rates for telephone surveys reported by Pew Research (Kennedy and Hartig 2019). Two of the few procedural justice experiments that have been undertaken achieved response rates of 14 and 13 per cent (Langley *et al.* 2020; Mazorelle *et al.* 2013a).

Telephone *vs.* online survey It is important to consider here whether it would have been better to use a telephone survey to have secured a higher response rate. This has the advantage of participants being encouraged to complete it, rather than being emailed a link, which they can choose to ignore. Telephone surveys also enable a respondent to clarify questions with the interviewer. Clark (2021) used police officers to conduct his telephone survey and this achieved a high response rate of 39.7 per cent. However, this method has weaknesses. Firstly, the survey was conducted by the same local police team who delivered the treatment, albeit by different officers, presenting risk of

interviewer bias. Secondly, these officers were of course not market researchers experienced in conducting surveys. Well-resourced surveys can achieve high response rates. For example, the CSEW achieves 75 per cent, with telephone interviews arranged by appointment following invitations sent in the post (Bradford and Myhill 2015). The option of using CMS staff to conduct a telephone survey was discounted due to this risk of bias and because this abstraction from their normal work would impact on service delivery. The option of using ORS to conduct telephone interviews, using the same methodology as the User Satisfaction Survey (a separate survey used to measure satisfaction from in-person reporting) was explored, but discounted because of the £16,000 cost this would incur. It was not a viable option to resort to a telephone survey once it was clear that responses were low. To introduce a different instrument mid-trial would have invited 'mode effects' of bias and threaten internal validity. Two surveys running in parallel for the same population would also diffuse response rates and cause confusion, and likely annoyance, to victims of crime.

Attempts to boost response rates As previously described in Methods, measures were put in place to increase survey responses. The main change was to reduce the time between the report of the crime and sending out the survey from up to three months down to 7 to 10 days. There was an assumption that temporal proximity would mean the survey would have more relevance to the victim and enhance motivation to complete it. In fact, this was a trial within a trial for MOPaC to explore whether current survey methodology should be adapted. Additional measures of encouraging participants to complete the survey and correcting email addresses so they could receive it could only be applied to the treatment group, risking disproportionately more responses from this group and not being representative of the sample. In fact, these

measures had negligible impact on the response rate. There was only a 0.7 per cent difference in the rates between treatment (7.5 per cent) and control (6.8 per cent) respondents. It is disappointing that this exploratory method is now ruled out as an option to increase survey responses. However, the fact it has been tested is of value to policy development on victim satisfaction. Moreover, the lack of effect provides confidence that the survey results are representative.

Survey representativeness A test to confirm whether responses were representative across treatment and control groups was to compare their demographic and other feature characteristics. The latter included whether they were repeat victims (a victim of any crime in the previous 12 months), their own perception of the impact of the crime on them based on a 1 to 10 Likert scale, the reporting process they experienced and its length (**Table VI**). This also included whether their crime was screened in. As being screened in was a criterion for exclusion, it may be surprising to see a small rate of screened in cases in the treatment (4 per cent) and control (2 per cent). This can be explained for the treatment group, as during the intervention 46 crimes were re-assessed to be screened in. For the control group there will have been a few cases where crimes were re-opened as a result of new information. This analysis finds no statistically significant differences between the two groups across any of the variables.

Further analyses were done to compare the demographic features of survey respondents to all those to whom the survey was sent to identify any respondent bias. Comparison was also made against demographics of all victims for vehicle crime in 2021 (Met Police 2022). It can be seen that there are some biases (**Table VII**). For example, those over 65 years old were more likely to respond to the survey and those aged 16 – 34

years old were less likely. There was also a slightly higher response rate from females to males and white to BAME victims. However, demographic features for the surveys sent and received are very similar to those for all vehicle crime victims. The only slight exception is ethnicity. This cannot be relied upon as this feature was only recorded for 20 per cent of 2021 vehicle crimes (Met Police 2022). These analyses provide confidence that, whilst response rates are small and there are some inherent biases in the respondents, the results are broadly representative of the sample and the wider population.

Exclusion procedure As described in Methods, better clarity was required on the inclusion critieria from the start of the trial. Interventions initially included all vehicle crime, but it transpired that survey eligiblity only included theft of motor vehicle and theft from motor vehicle. The criteria was ammended and these other crime types were removed from week four. A total of 98 victims of other vehicle crimes were included for treatment at the intervention stage, but were later excluded (**Appendix F**). Finally, having an additional exclusion process after the intervention is of course not best practice in an RCT. It was done because some exclusions could only identified through the intervention, and as a simple process to complete interventions before passing participants to MOPaC. It is important to stress that neither of these apparent weaknesses in the exclusion process impacted on experimental validity. There was consitency throughout in the criteria applied for survey eligibility and the post-intervention exclusion process was automated and independent of the implementation team. It did however mean that 315 treatment participants were lost to the experiment. Any replication of this trial is recommended to have the MOPaC automated exclusion process precede the interventions.

Recommendations for further research

This trial produced clear evidence on the positive effect of reassurance calls on vehicle crime satisfaction. This is at apparent variance to the findings of Clark *et al.* (2022). They concluded that calls had a significant impact on satisfaction of victims of cycle theft, but 'negligible effect' on vehicle crime victims, and for some victim demographics suggesting a negative 'backfire' effect. This prompts questions of which results are correct and where does this leave this field of research? It is first important to credit Clark *et al*. for their exploratory work in this area. Mazorelle *et al.* (2013a) heralded their research as the 'world's first' RCT to test procedural justice and Clark *et al.* were the first to test its effect when delivered by telephone. This trial directly benefitted from the Clark *et al.* experiment being conducted recently and in the same setting of the Met Police. It did however have several limitations. Firstly, the small sample size of 954 participants meant statistical significance was achieved to compare vehicle crime and cycle theft, but not when numbers were broken down for analyses of sub-groups. Secondly, whilst their setting of Central North BCU provided a diverse inner city population, there may be local variations in this victim population. For example, Camden Lock Market is the largest open air market in Europe and many victims will be visitors rather than residents. Thirdly, by categorising vehicle crime as one and not distinguishing between the modes of reporting, the experiment was unable to identify the influence of these variables on satisfaction. Fourthly, as previously mentioned, the use of police officers to conduct the survey invited both experimenter bias on the part of the team and social desirability bias from respondents, tending to be more positive towards telephone surveys (although the lack of satisfaction for vehicle crime suggests other factors being present). This trial sought to address these constraints

and, notwithstanding low survey responses, it provides strong scientific evidence of the positive effect of the intervention. Of course, just because Clark *et al.* found no effect on vehicle crime victims, it does not mean there was no effect. Rather than the two experiments presenting a dichotomous choice of right or wrong, they should instead be seen as complimenting each other and developing knowledge in this important area of policing.

Whilst Clark *et al.* (2022) raised questions that this trial has aimed to answer, it is important that this is not the last word. Vehicle crime was tested because it is one of the most common crimes and enabled comparison with Clark *et al*. However, it does not follow that other crimes will see the same results. Robbery and burglary achieve higher rates of satisfaction (MOPaC 2021a). This research indicates this is because they receive more procedural justice, with mandatory call backs and screening in for a second opinion by an experienced local detective. It also suggests that, having been given a dose of this justice, reassurance calls would increase satisfaction, but the differences would be less than for vehicle crime. However, we do not know this, and so cannot say for sure what the increase in satisfaction would be if applied across all surveyed crime types.

The second area requiring further experimentation is the mode of delivery. COVID-19 has accelerated the use of technology, such as MS Teams and Zoom, to enable face-to-face virtual meetings as routine in policing, as they are across society. Some forces have adopted the use of 'GoodSAM' to facilitate visual interaction with victims at the scene (Cambridgeshire Constabulary 2020). Ariel *et al.* (2019) demonstrated the impact of improving legitimacy of the Uruguayan police using body worn cameras in traffic stops.

It would be a fascinating area of research to identify whether a more personal visual virtual encounter than a telephone call can deliver more procedural justice and more satisfaction. There is much more work to be done in this fertile field of research. However, this does not detract from the evidence that has already been found and the opportunity to improve service delivery to the public without delay. Indeed, there is evidence that the gains achieved in the trial have quickly dissipated with its conclusion at the end of November 2021. The trial treatment survey responses constituted about 8 per cent of all responses from the TDIU Survey (MOPaC 2021b), but nonetheless were able to contribute to an increase in overall satisfaction in the wider survey; 52 per cent for telephone and 46 per cent for online (MOPaC 2022). However, in December 2021 these rates slipped to 46 per cent and 44 per cent respectively (**Figure 12**).

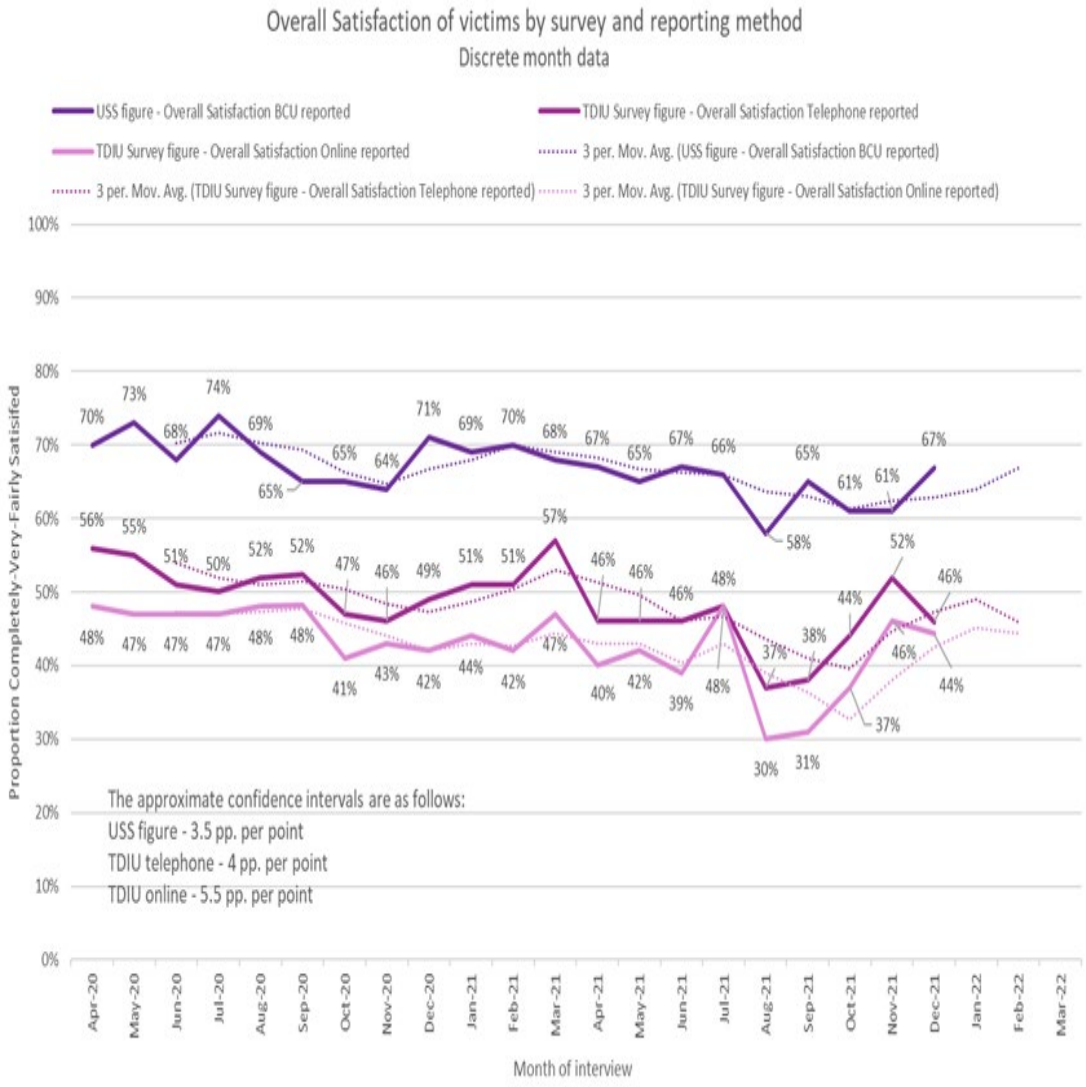

Figure 12: TDIU and User Satisfaction Survey December 2022 (MOPaC 2022)

Policy Implications

As applied criminology, the purpose of this research was above all to use evidence to improve policing. This section sets out the implications of this trial for operational policing and outlines costed options to significantly improve victim satisfaction in London. Telephone and online investigation are likely to increase as more demands are placed on policing. The Contact Resolution Service sees future Met Police demand being managed by more 'self-service' and 'automation' (Met Police 2021d). These

words elicit caution that they do not abandon procedural justice in their focus on managing demand. Solving crimes will be not achievable in more cases and procedural justice will assume greater importance. The advantage of a reassurance call is that, in a policing environment that is increasingly complex, risky and with unpredictable variables, it is relatively simple. It is also within the control of the police to do it. The results of this trial demonstrate, not only the ready benefits to be achieved, but also the critical role of the telephone investigator as point of contact between the public and police. Research concludes that customer satisfaction is achieved if employees are satisfied in their work and that this is provided by good training and support (Chicu *et al.* 2020). The need for police training in 'soft skills' to deliver procedural justice has previously been recommended (Tyler and Hou 2002).

Costs *vs.* benefits That all victims of crime should receive a reassurance call is not in dispute. Indeed, many would expect that this already happens. It is very much a resourcing issue. Seeking to deliver calls to all victims means that something else has to give. Having articulated the benefits, this prompts the question, how much does victim satisfaction cost? In estimating this, the total annual cost of £60,255 for a police constable is used (Met Police 2021e). The daily deployment of four officers and staff in this trial enabled the potential delivery of 3,751 interventions. This consisted of 2,744 calls actually delivered, 307 with no response, 17 with no contact details and 660 excess who there was insufficient time to contact. The calculation allows for a 25 per cent excess (five officers) to account for abstractions of leave, sickness and training. This means each member of the team delivered or attempted to deliver 750 interventions. There was a total of 21,080 cases of screened out theft from motor vehicle and theft of motor vehicle during the trial period (Met Police 2021b). This would mean 84,320 if

replicated across the year. This would require 28 officers, each with a potential to deliver 3,752 calls, to achieve the satisfaction levels obtained in this experiment, costing £1.7 million. Vehicle crime accounts for 57 per cent of survey responses (Met Police 2021b) and so the TDIU Survey would show a satisfaction increase of 12 percentage points, placing satisfaction from telephone and online reporting on par with that currently achieved by face-to-face reporting (**Figure 12**). This could be scaled up further, to provide reassurance calls for all surveyed crime types (robbery, burglary, assault and hate crime) that are reported by telephone or online and screened out. For the period of the trial this was 6,445 crimes, with 25,824 if replicated across the year, and totalling 110,144 when combined with vehicle crime. This would require 37 officers and cost £2.2 million. On the other hand, targeting calls only to online reporters of screened out vehicle crime (estimated at 19,328) to achieve 78 per cent satisfaction among these respondents would need only 6.4 officers (£385,632). These are options for police leaders to consider, set against the alternative of not addressing declining satisfaction and the wider impact this may have on trust and confidence.

There are alternatives to a centrally resourced unit to deliver the calls. The role might be performed by Safer Neighbourhood Teams or small 'Victim Satisfaction Desks' that could be established in every BCU, possibly without staffing uplift. However, centralisation provides benefits of consistency and effective tracking, and it complements the roles performed by TDIU and CMS in managing volume crime investigations. Whatever the model, the role is ideally suited to 'adjusted duties' officers who are unable to perform frontline tasks. It is also clear that any solution needs to be wedded to a wider strategic framework, to embed what would be a strategic shift in the narrative on victims and police performance. There must always be a

presumption that a crime will be investigated, and proportionate effort and resources put into solving it. But this must be done in parallel, and not in isolation to, a greater focus on procedure.

Conclusion

This dissertation has explored the theory and extant body of research evidence on what causes victims to be satisfied. It has also provoked reflection across a whole range of issues that get to the very heart of policing. A consensus of scholarship illustrates the importance of procedural justice. This trial joins a small number of field experiments that demonstrate its causal effect with strong and compelling evidence. Moreover, no previous systematic study has compared differences in the impact on telephone and online reporters. It also provides an evidence base that satisfaction from a reassurance call can have wider impact on trust and confidence. As such, the findings are not only important, but also much more optimistic than other studies (Skogan 2006; Clark *et al.* 2022). They provide a ready solution to turn around the decline in victim satisfaction in the Met Police and to be an enabler for better trust and confidence. All achieved through the simple act of a telephone call. The aim of this trial was to deliver procedural justice in an experimental setting and to produce meaningful findings to be applied to operational policing. As the reassurance call clearly works, the policy implication is to do more of it. Further research is necessary to explore the impact on other crimes, as well as different methods of intervention. However, this should not delay consideration of these ready measures to significantly improve police performance right now.

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Appendix A: CONSORT 2010 Checklist of information to include when reporting a randomised trial

Title and abstract

1a Identification as a randomised trial in the title

Testing the effects of delivering procedural justice by reassurance telephone calls to victims of screened out vehicle crime: evidence from a randomised controlled trial.

1b Structured summary of trial design, methods, results and conclusions Randomised controlled trial to deliver independent variable (reassurance call) with dependent variable (victim satisfaction) measured by online survey. Detailed in Methods and Results chapters.

Introduction – Background and Objectives

2a Scientific background and explanation of rationale

Significant decline in victim satisfaction in Met Police over the past 18 months, with concurrent decline in trust and confidence. Recent small-scale exploratory study suggests reassurance calls may increase satisfaction, but that this is predicated by crime type. No large scale experiment has been conducted for volume crime and there has been no previous investigation of modus of reporting (telephone *vs.* online).

2b Specific objectives or hypothesis

Procedural justice delivered by telephone calls increases victim satisfaction, but this may be influenced by modes of reporting, crime type, victim demographics and the length of the call.

Objectives

To provide empirical evidence of the effect of reassurance calls on victim satisfaction. This will advance an under-explored and highly relevant field of research and inform police leaders of the costs and benefits of investing in this policing tactic.

Methods

Randomised controlled trial supported by online survey instrument. Detailed in Methods chapter.

Trial Design

3a Description of trial design including allocation ratio

Detailed in CONSORT flow diagram p. 46.

3b Important changes to methods after trial commencement, such as eligibility criteria with reasons

See Methods p. 43.

4a Eligibility criteria for participants

See Methods p. 28.

4b Settings and locations where the data were located

See Methods p. 32. Crime report data held on Met Police Crime Report Investigation System (CRIS). Intervention data held on MS Teams spreadsheet. Survey data held by MOPaC Evidence and Insight Team.

5 The interventions for each group with sufficient details to allow replication, including how and when they were administered

See Methods p. 36.

Outcomes

6a Completely defined pre-specified primary and secondary outcome measures, including how and when they were assessed

Primary

a) Effect of reassurance calls on victims of screen out vehicle crime

Secondary

a) Effect of reassurance calls telephone *vs*. online reporting
b) Effect of reassurance calls theft of motor vehicle *vs.* theft from motor vehicle
c) Effect of reassurance calls telephone *vs*. victim demographics
d) Effect of reassurance calls telephone *vs*. duration of call

6b Any changes to trial outcomes after the trial commenced, with reasons
None.

Sample Size
7a How sample size was determined
Sample size determined by implementation team capacity and three month period available for fieldwork. It was anticipated that the total sample of 8,000 could be achieved. A large sample was required to mitigate an anticipated low survey response rate.
7b When applicable explanation of any interim analysis and stopping guidelines There was no stopping of the trial which ran Monday to Friday for the duration of the experiment. All analyses was conducted at completion of the experiment.

Randomisation Sequence Generation
8a Method used to generate random allocation sequence – Automated allocation of CRIS unique reference numbers, with even numbers allocated to treatment and odd numbers to control.
8b Type of randomisation and details of any restriction such as blocking or block size) Randomisation of participants into two single treatment and control groups. However analyses enabled sub-categorisation for reporting modus, vehicle crime type, participant demographics and length of call.

Allocation concealment mechanism
9 Mechanism used to implement the random allocation sequence describing any steps taken to conceal the sequence until interventions were assigned
The sequential allocation of crime numbers and assignment to treatment and control was automatically generated by CRIS based on the time that the crime was reported. An automated search set the exclusion parameters to provide the initial sample. The implementation team had no influence on the randomisation process.

Implementation
10 Who generated the random allocation sequence, who enrolled participants and who assigned participants to interventions
Random allocation was automated and sample provided by daily download from CRIS. Implementation team applied further exclusions before interventions. All interventions or attempted interventions recorded on MS Teams spreadsheet which only the team had access to. Daily implementation overseen by police Sergeant.

Blinding
11a If done, who was blinded after assignment to interventions and how
See Methods p. 41.
11b If relevant, description of the similarity of interventions
See Methods 36.

Statistical Methods
12a Statistical methods used to compare groups for primary and secondary outcomes
Descriptive analysis and Chi-Square tests ($p = 0.05$).
12b Methods for additional analysis, such as sub-group analyses and adjusted analyses
Descriptive analysis and Chi-Square tests ($p = 0.05$).

Participant Flow
13a For each group, the numbers of participants who were randomly assigned, received intended treatment, and were analysed for primary outcome
See CONSORT flow diagram p.46.
13b For each group, losses and exclusions after randomisation, together with reasons
See CONSORT flow diagram p.46 and **Appendix F.**

Recruitment
14a Dates defining period recruitment and follow-up
Fieldwork conducted 1 September to 31 November 2021 totalling 78 working days.
14b Why the trial was ended of stopped
The trial was conducted within the planned timeframe.

15 A table showing baseline demographic and clinical characteristics for each group
See Tables V, VI and VII.

16 For each group, number of participants included for each group analysis and whether the analysis was by original assigned group
See Results chapter.

17a For each primary and secondary outcome, results for each group and the estimated effect size and its precision
See Results chapter.

18 Results of any other analyses performed, including sub-group and adjusted analyses, distinguishing pre-specified from exploratory
See Results chapter.

19 All important harms or unintended effects in each group
No harm was caused to participants. Control group received statutory and local policy police response for screened out volume crime. Treatment group received additional service.

Limitations
20 Trial limitations, addressing sources of potential bias, imprecision and multiplicity of analyses
Detailed in Discussion chapter.

21 Generalisability of the trial findings
Detailed in Discussion chapter. The trial has a high degree of generalisability in implementation and findings. Vehicle crime is common in all countries, although there are variations in the reporting process and operational response. All police forces in England and Wales operate similar models to the Met Police with telephone and online investigation of most volume crime. All police forces have criteria for when volume crime is screened in for further investigation and all are required to have victim satisfaction surveys as a measurement of performance.

22 Interpretation consistent with results, balancing benefits and harms and considering other relevant evidence
Costs and benefits detailed in Discussion chapter.

23 Registration number and name of trial registry
Not completed.

24 Where the full trial protocol can be accessed
Refer thesis document.

25 Sources of funding and other support
Total cost estimated at £55,688. Additional cost of £4,520 for weekly TDIU Survey provided by MOPaC. Approximate staffing cost based on police Constable and police staff Band E 'ready reckoner' for four officers or staff working daily on experiment for 78 days, with addition of 50 per cent of one police Sergeant supervision time; £51,168 provided by The Met.

Appendix B: CMS Victim Satisfaction Experiment: A How To Guide

Huge thanks to all of you for volunteering to be part of this experiment to test the impact of 'reassurance' calls on victim satisfaction.

Why are doing this?

Improving victim satisfaction is a key priority for us. This is set out clearly in both Met Direction and the Mayor's Police & Crime Plan.

Victim satisfaction is measured by a survey commissioned by the Mayor's Office for Policing & Crime (MOPaC). This is done through the 'User Satisfaction Survey' (USS) where telephone interviews are conducted on a set number of victims from each BCU and the 'TDIU Satisfaction Survey' where all victims of crimes reported to TDIU (and CMS for online reports) receive an online survey to complete. Satisfaction with The Met has declined over the past few years. It is currently 68% and satisfaction with telephone and online investigation consistently lags behind face-to-face reporting, at 51% and 46% respectively.

We cannot fully investigate every crime and resources must be focused where there is greatest threat, risk and harm and there is ready opportunity to solve it. This means that for volume crime, detection rates remain low. If a crime cannot be solved, it is essential that we provide victims with reassurance and advice so that they know that their report matters, that the information they have provided will be put to use and they can take steps to prevent themselves being becoming repeat victims. The perceptions of victims are important. If victims are not satisfied, we have failed to provide a decent service and they may be reluctant to report crimes in the future or provide information or support The Met. All this is key to the principle of 'policing by consent.'

Vehicle crime impacts on a huge number of Londoners and visitors to the city. Last year, there were 68,168 reports of property being stolen from vehicles and 25,605 vehicles reported as stolen. Detection rates are just 1% for Theft from Motor Vehicle and 3% for Theft of Motor Vehicle. Whilst there are operational successes, detection rates will likely remain low. In addition, modern policing is likely to become more reliant on victim self-service and automation to address demand and maximise digital opportunities.

It is clear that we need to improve victim satisfaction and to do this where we do not necessarily deploy to a crime and where the crime cannot be reasonably solved. At the moment we do not have capacity to call back every victim of crime. Where we tried to do this, huge backlogs meant that we were not calling victims for several weeks to conduct an initial investigation. This was clearly a poor service.

We might assume that calling victims of crime will improve their satisfaction with our service. It shows we care and we can give practical advice on steps to take to prevent it happening again. However, as this is not backed by evidence, we simply do not know. An experiment was conducted on CN BCU last year, calling victims of 'screened out' vehicle crime and theft of pedal cycle. These calls appeared to significantly increase satisfaction for victims of theft of pedal cycle, but had no impact on victims of vehicle crime. Furthermore, there were differences across gender, race and age demographics.

The purpose of this experiment is to test these findings on a much larger scale. What we find out will be really important. It will enable us to determine with confidence whether reassurance calls have an impact on victim satisfaction, whether this varies across the two types of vehicle crime and whether there are differences across demographics and London boroughs. Moreover, this will tell us 'how much' more satisfaction can be achieved. This will inform decisions on how we model and resource telephone and online reporting in the future.

What do we mean by experiment?

This is what is called a 'Randomised Control Trial' or RCT. In simple terms, this means we divide a sample population into a 'treatment group,' who will receive a treatment, and a 'control group,' who will receive no treatment. For this experiment, the sample population are victims of vehicle crime and the treatment is the reassurance call.

An RCT is the 'gold standard' for proving 'causation' (the direct effect of a treatment) rather than 'correlation' (a relationship between a treatment and the effect where we cannot be sure that other factors have not impacted on the results). There are four key elements to make an RCT work to provide a high level of confidence in the validity of the results:

1. The selection into the treatment and control groups must be 'randomised' so that both groups are in essence the same and there is no bias in this selection that might impact on the results.

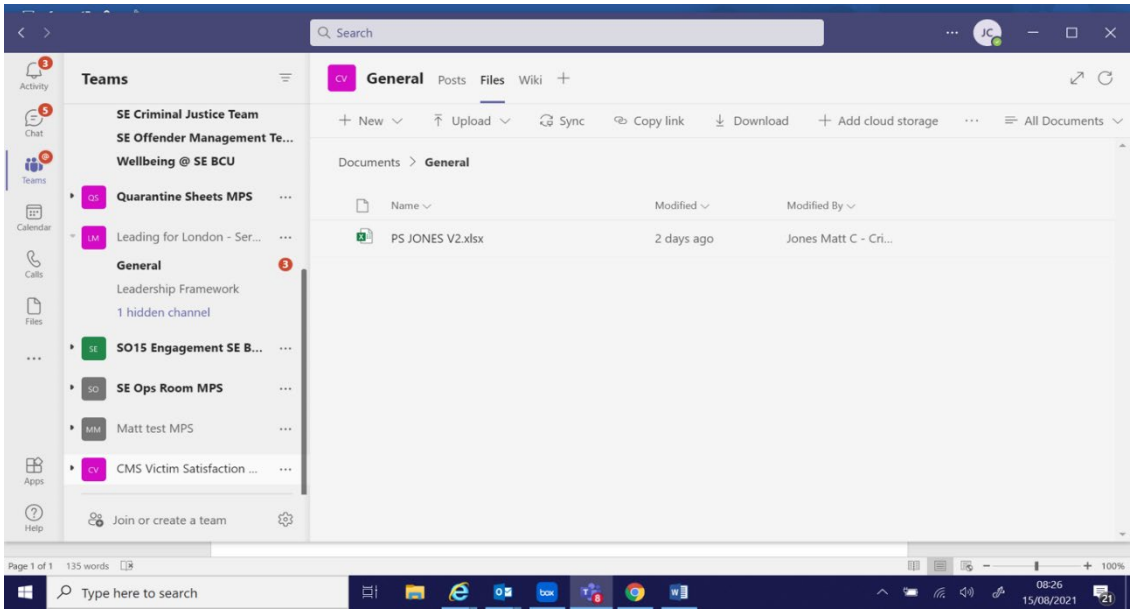
2. There must be strict controls to ensure treatment and control groups remain separate. If there is diffusion between them the integrity of the results will be undermined.

3. We need to maximise the amount of data we collect as this provides 'statistical power' and our confidence that the results will reflect the world outside the experiment. For us, this means maximising both the responses to our reassurance calls and to the satisfaction survey. If we get a 70% response to our calls and a 25% response to the survey, this means we have a 17.5% 'true percentage' of our sample. We have put in place measures to seek to achieve this (see below).

4. Good people who are engaged on making the experiment work. This is you!

How will it work?

The platform for recording our work is MS Teams. You have been invited to the Teams group 'CMS Victim Satisfaction Experiment'.



Click on the 'Teams' icon on the left hand side (3 figures). In the second column you will see the group 'CMS Victim Satisfaction project.'

As you can see from the screen shot above, Files will take you to the spreadsheet we will be working on (currently named 'PS JONES'). Within this Files section will be added all the documents, including this 'how to guide', the 'script' for the reassurance calls and the 'good news leaflet.'

Completing the spreadsheet

A search has been created on CRIS to provide data of all 'screened out' Theft of Motor Vehicle (TOMV) and Theft from Motor Vehicle (TFMV).

The search date will be from the previous 48 hours. For example, when the experiment goes 'live' on Wednesday 1st September, the data will commence from Monday 31st August. Initially, Matt Jones will run the search and paste it into the spreadsheet (this task will be delegated to others in the experiment team once it is up and running).

The data pasted includes the following information: The CRIS number, the current classification, the methodology and the vehicle crime group.

Treatment, Control, Excluded and Intention to Treat

The 'RCT' column dictates which victims we call and which we don't. Each crime report is allocated into either the treatment group (T) or control group (C) or is 'excluded' from the experiment (E). For the purposes of this experiment the 'randomisation' into the two groups will be as follows:

Those with an EVEN last digit CRIS number we will call – treatment group (T) NB: Even includes last digit 'zero.'

Those with an ODD last digit CRIS number we won't call – control group (C).

This way we can be sure that there is no bias as to which reports are selected for treatment and which are in the control group. They are simply selected at random based on the computer generated CRIS number.

Some reports will be 'excluded' from the experiment and marked as 'E.' This is because including them would interfere with the aim of the experiment i.e.: to determine the impact of reassurance calls on victim satisfaction. The following reports where identified MUST be excluded:

1. Any vehicle crime 'screened in' for further investigation (this should be excluded in the daily search)
2. Any vehicle crime reported on SW BCU. This is because colleagues there are conducting a pilot to call back victims of crime (again, this should be excluded in the daily search)
3. Any Crime Related Incidents with no victim to contact or which have been incorrectly classified as vehicle crime
4. Cases where there are no contact details for the victim (so they cannot be sent the survey)

Experimental modelling requires that, once a report is allocated to the treatment group, it will remain in it irrespective of whether you are able to contact the victim (i.e. there is no response having made three attempts to call). This is known as 'intention to treat.'

Finally, it may be that in the course of your conversation with victims you find out more facts and you determine that the crime should be screened back in for further investigation. If this occurs, the report will remain in the treatment group and it is not excluded. To reflect normal conditions, there will be some cases where it is suitable to refer the victim for a visit by the local safer Neighbourhood Team. Again, these victims remain in the treatment group.

The relevant 'T' and 'C' group will be confirmed at the time of uploading the data onto the spreadsheet. Reports in the 'E' group should be filtered through the search and not appear, but you must double check based on the above criteria and mark them as 'E' if any get through.

Finally, we anticipate that we will be able to do 80 – 100 reassurance calls a day. For this reason our daily search will be limited to crimes confirmed as screened out over the previous 48 hours to ensure that numbers are manageable and we can at least attempt to call all victims in the Treatment group each day. This will be reviewed the experiment progresses and we have a better understanding of daily demand.

Inputting the Data

Once the CRIS reports have been divided into the T, C and E groups, we are ready to start the day.

One of the advantages of using MS Teams is that it is a 'live' document that can be worked on by different people at the same time. However, to prevent more than one person working on the same CRIS report, you have been allocated a specific colour to highlight the CRIS you are working on. This colour is yours for the entirety of the experiment (sorry if it is not your favourite!). Simply colour the CRIS number box to your elected colour and ownership is yours (see below).

	TS
	JC
	TC
	SC
	RG
	MW
	AR
	SR
	AS
	BT

Selection of CRIS report

Highlight in your colour. Familiarise yourself with the 'Dets' so you understand what happened before calling victim.

Fill out the spreadsheet with the victims' details. If the email address is not recorded on the CRIS or is recorded incorrectly, please insert it here and also please update the CRIS report (this will assist the response to the victim satisfaction survey which will be sent online).

Making the Reassurance Call

We will make our calls to victims between the hours of 0900hrs and 1900hrs Monday to Friday.

There is an aide memoire for you follow when making these calls. This is guidance to ensure we cover all the key points and there is consistency in the 'treatment' we apply to victims. It is not to be read out verbatim. You are all experienced in this work and the best interaction with victims will come from your 'soft skills' as well as your professional knowledge.

In most cases, it will be appropriate to give victims crime prevention advice so that they can take practical steps to prevent themselves becoming victims again. However, in the conversation you may sense it is not appropriate to do this or it is declined by the victim. That's fine, we just want to ensure the offer is there if they want it.

At the conclusion of the call you will email the victim a 'good news leaflet' that demonstrates what The Met is doing about vehicle crime. If the victim asks for their crime number or links to any crime prevention or support advice (their Victim Letter has these but may not yet have been issued), then just add these in the email you send.

We do NOT want victims to know that they are part of an experiment, so please do not mention this. This is known as 'blinding' (i.e.: the sample are unaware of the experiment) and it avoids risk that any knowledge may influence the interaction and the satisfaction survey.

We want to maximise the number of victims we contact in the treatment group (the more responses, the bigger the 'statistical power' of the results). There are two measures in place to assist this:

1. **Caller number withheld**

We know that some people will not accept a call when the caller number is withheld. This will be the case when making a call from a Met landline or when calling on your own mobile if working from home. Our pilot indicates a high level of response (83%) by sending a text message before you make a call, either from your mobile or a Met landline.

For now, please send the following text prior to all calls. (This will be reviewed as the experiment progresses).

'Good morning / afternoon/ evening, this is the Metropolitan Police. We are seeking to contact you regarding your recently reported crime. We will call again shortly from a withheld number. 3 attempts will be made to contact you today. If no contact is made, there is no need to contact police further. Regards'.

If using a Met landline, dial '1848' first. This creates a 'ghost number' that the victim will see. If using your mobile you must dial '141' first to withhold your personal number.

2. **Making three call attempts**

We will try the number 3 times and only during that day. It is best to do this at different times during the course of that day. Each attempt you make, colour in the 1st, 2nd or 3rd box with your allocated colour and the time of your call. If you make contact on the first call, then only colour in the 1st call back attempt box, noting the time of the call. (This is important for future data purposes). The exception to only calling victims that day will be where contact is made with the victim but it is not convenient for them to speak that day and an appointment can be made to call them the following day. Please action this to yourself or a colleague on the team to make this call.

Updating the CRIS Report

Each CRIS report in the treatment group should be updated in 'Dets' with either of the following:

1. Victim contacted

'The victim has been given as reassurance call and crime prevention advice as part of a CMS victim satisfaction project.'

2. Unable to contact victim

'As part of a CMS victim satisfaction project three attempts have been made to contact the victim to provide reassurance and crime prevention advice. I have received no response. No further action is required in respect of this report.'

This will assist if the victim later contacts the CMS or the officer in the case.

Good News Leaflet

A 'good news' leaflet has been prepared in conjunction with the Met leads for vehicle crime and Directorate for Media & Communications providing information on what The Met is doing about it. This is to be emailed to the victim at the conclusion of your call. This is separate to the Victim Letter, that will have already been sent at the time of initial investigation, or is in the process of being sent if reported in person.

Duration of call

Please provide the approximate duration of the reassurance call. This will be helpful in determining the best length of time to speak to victims to maximise their satisfaction. Previous research indicates there is a minimum time to achieve satisfaction, but also a time after which any positive impact begins to fade.

What Next?

The next stage is the victim satisfaction survey. This is a detailed set of questions that are sent by email and by SMS text by a market research company contracted by MOPaC. MOPaC have adapted the survey for this experiment so that it is sent out every week, rather than 2 – 3 months after the crime is reported, as is the case at present. This, plus inclusion in the 'script' for you to tell victims that the survey will be sent out and asking them to complete it, will maximise the response rate and our 'true percentage' of the sample group.

We are working closely with the MOPaC team who will be able to match our treatment and control group reports to the survey responses and so allow a detailed analysis of the impact of the calls on victim satisfaction; whether or not they received the treatment, whether they were victims of theft from a vehicle or theft of a vehicle, whether they reported by telephone or online and victim demographics.

It is really important that we keep a track on the delivery of the experiment and make any tweaks to it if necessary. To this end, we will have a weekly informal catch-up on MS Teams, also including the MOPaC team. If you are on duty, please drop in. Outside of this, do contact Matt if you have any issues or queries.

The experiment will commence on 1st September and conclude on 30th November.

Early in the new year we will be able to report the results, firstly through the Victim Care Board chaired by the DAC, and then wider. This is 'evidence-based policing' in practice, using science to determine what works well, and what does not, and learning from this to improve our service to Londoners. As part of the experiment team you will be 'pracademics', practically applying academic theory in the practical world of policing!

Jim McKee

Matt Jones August 2021

Appendix C: Victim Satisfaction Experiment – Reassurance Call Guidance

This guidance provides the key points to cover in reassurance calls to victims of 'screened out' vehicle crime in respect of the CMS experiment to test the impact on victim satisfaction. It is not a 'script' to be read verbatim. But it is important that all four key points are covered to ensure that all victims in the treatment group receive the same treatment.

1. **Reassurance and explanation of the process**

We know that every crime has an impact on victims, ranging from an inconvenience to life-changing impact. Ensuring that you get the best service we can deliver with the right support and advice is really important to us. You are entitled to this under the Victims' Code of Practice. There is a link in the Victim Letter, but if asked they can access on *https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime).*

How has this crime impacted on you? *(Explore the personal impact on the victim, showing empathy and understanding of their feelings).* We want to reassure you that London remains a safe capital city and being a victim of crime should not be a common experience.

If you want to receive further support you can access this through the London Victim & Witness Service. *(There is a link in the Victim Letter, but if asked they can access it on https://www.londonvws.org.uk).* If you would like to have further contact with your local Safer Neighbourhood Team we can arrange this. *(Update action on CRIS if necessary or provide local SNT contact details if preferred).*

I would like to explain what happens next in respect of your crime. It has been assessed as not suitable for further investigation at this time. The Met Police has a policy that all reported crimes are investigated. An initial investigation will always be conducted to determine the nature of the offence and whether there are leads that may help solve it. For vehicle crime and other volume crime we follow our Crime Assessment Principles. These set out the criteria for further investigation, such as identified suspects, available CCTV and forensics. We also consider the impact of the crime on the victim, such as whether they have been a repeat victim.

If a crime does not meet the criteria for further investigation, it does not mean we do nothing and it is forgotten about. Your report really matters in helping us understand local crime trends so that we can direct our officers in their patrols and we can identify suspects who are committing offences from trends and patterns. If further information becomes available, we will re-assess as to whether there should be further investigation.
Officers across The Met are working day and night conducting stops and searches of people, vehicles and premises. We frequently come across stolen property and if we can identify it as linked to a crime. For example, your car is circulated as stolen or you have property that has been marked) we can arrest the suspects. We are also conducting proactive operations against organised crime groups who commit a lot of these offences and there are some details on this in the Leaflet I will send to you.

2. **Crime Prevention Advice**

It is really important that you can take practical steps to prevent yourself becoming a victim of crime again. You will receive links to advice on the Met Police website in your Victim Letter as well as the 'secured-by-design' and 'immobilise' websites which provide advice on approved products and registering your property. We can talk through these options now if you wish. Vehicle crime prevention advice is also regularly shared by the Organised Vehicle Crime Unit through local police Twitter messages.

(Do ensure that you read and understand the advice on vehicle crime and property marking provided on met.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/keeping-vehicles-safe/, securedbydesign.com and immobilise.com, so you can speak with professional knowledge. It is optional whether you then discuss some practical tips over the phone. You will get a sense of the value of this from the victim. Please follow their steer on this).

Theft from Motor Vehicle – tips

Leaving items on show is an invitation – power leads, Satnavs and mounts, stereo front panels, coins, sunglasses, tools, clothing and bags should be removed from the vehicle or placed out of sight.

Keys and ignition fobs should kept safe and out of sight and reach – the most common ways to steal a car or van is to take the keys or ignition fob, either when left in the vehicle or from your home through burglary. Try not to keep your keys in an obvious place such as the hallway or kitchen.

Always lock and close the windows of your vehicle when unattended – on the drive, the petrol station forecourt or when parking an unlocked vehicle is the easiest to steal or steal from.

Fit an alarm or immobiliser if your vehicle does not have one.

Set the steering wheel lock if your vehicle is fitted with one. If not, use a bar type steering lock each time you leave your vehicle. Also consider using a gear stick lock.

Some criminal gangs are looking out for certain vehicles where the wing mirrors automatically fold in when locked – if they notice such a vehicle with the wing mirrors still open, they will know it is unlocked and will then steal it. **Make sure you lock your vehicle properly at all times.**

Mark your vehicle and belongings with Met Trace or smart water – this will leave traces that can link the property back to you if it is recovered. We can also get traces from tools used by criminals to open vehicle locks.

Catalytic Convertors – there are guards and clamps that are available and should be fitted by a qualified mechanic. Convertors can also be property marked. It is important that this is heat resistant and done by a garage).

Theft of Motor Vehicle - tips

Fit theft resistant number plate fittings – stolen number plates are commonly used to hide the identity of stolen vehicles. Use one way clutch head screws and adhesive to secure the plates.

Tracking device - If you don't have one, consider fitting a tracking device to your vehicle to help recover it if stolen.

Parking - if you have a garage at home, use it. If you don't, try to park in a well-lit open place. When out and about - try to park your vehicle in a Park Mark approved car park which has an approved security standard, or if not, park in an area that is overlooked and well lit.

Thieves are using sophisticated methods to steal vehicles with electronic keys - a scanner is used to locate the signal from the key. To prevent this, always keep the electronic key in a security pouch when not in use.

Fitting locking wheel nuts will reduce the likelihood of wheels and tyres being stolen.

Mark your vehicle and belongings with Met Trace or smart water – this will leave traces that can link the property back to you if it is recovered. We can also get traces from tools used by criminals to open vehicle locks.

Use a circular steering wheel lock.

Keep your vehicle registration documents in a safe place. Do not to disclose the unique serial number to anyone as this can be used by fraudsters committing vehicle crime.

3. **'Good News' Leaflet**

You will have / will be receiving a Victim Letter. This provides your crime reference number, points of contact to provide or obtain updates and links to the Met Police website for advice on crime prevention and the Victims' Code of Practice, as well as support services provided by London Victim & Witness Service. **I am separately sending you a Leaflet that sets out what the Met is doing about vehicle crime** (obviously don't send it if they don't want it!).

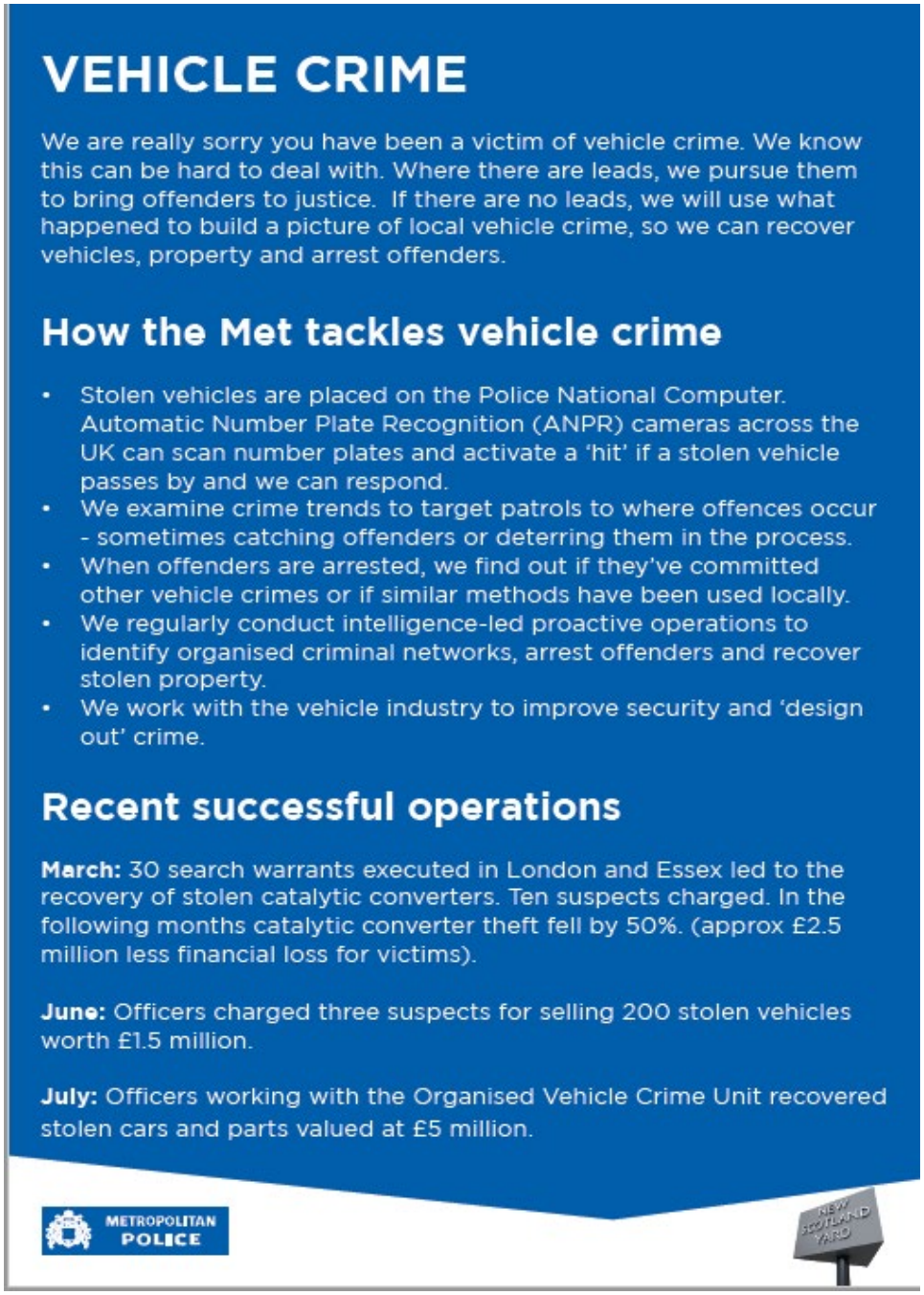
4. **Victim Satisfaction Survey**

In 7 – 10 days you will receive a Victim Satisfaction Survey by text and email. I would be really grateful if you could take the time to complete this survey, which consists of 15 questions (about 10 minutes to complete) on how you were dealt with and your confidence in policing in London. We work closely with the Mayor's Office for Policing & Crime (MOPaC) to analyse and understand trends in victim satisfaction and we are actively seeking to improve where we can.

Jim McKee

August 2021

APPENDIX D: How the Met tackles vehicle crime



VEHICLE CRIME

We are really sorry you have been a victim of vehicle crime. We know this can be hard to deal with. Where there are leads, we pursue them to bring offenders to justice. If there are no leads, we will use what happened to build a picture of local vehicle crime, so we can recover vehicles, property and arrest offenders.

How the Met tackles vehicle crime

- Stolen vehicles are placed on the Police National Computer. Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras across the UK can scan number plates and activate a 'hit' if a stolen vehicle passes by and we can respond.
- We examine crime trends to target patrols to where offences occur - sometimes catching offenders or deterring them in the process.
- When offenders are arrested, we find out if they've committed other vehicle crimes or if similar methods have been used locally.
- We regularly conduct intelligence-led proactive operations to identify organised criminal networks, arrest offenders and recover stolen property.
- We work with the vehicle industry to improve security and 'design out' crime.

Recent successful operations

March: 30 search warrants executed in London and Essex led to the recovery of stolen catalytic converters. Ten suspects charged. In the following months catalytic converter theft fell by 50%. (approx £2.5 million less financial loss for victims).

June: Officers charged three suspects for selling 200 stolen vehicles worth £1.5 million.

July: Officers working with the Organised Vehicle Crime Unit recovered stolen cars and parts valued at £5 million.

METROPOLITAN POLICE

NEW SCOTLAND YARD

APPENDIX E: TDIU Survey questions

Telephone and Online:

After you reported your crime did you receive any further contact from police about this incident other than receving an email or letter acknowleging your report? Yes / No / Don't know

Were you provided with a crime reference number? Yes / No / Don't know

Were you given an explanation of what was going to happen and why? Yes / No / Don't know

Were you offered any crime prevention information or advice? Yes / No / Don't know

Were you informed that your case was closed unless further information came to light? Yes / No / Don't know

Were you sent of provided with a Victim Leaflet? Yes / No / Don't know

Were you made aware of the Victim's Code when you reported your crime? Yes / No / Don't know

Were you offered the services of the London Victim & Witness Service (LVWS)? Yes / No / Don't know

How well did the reporting process meet your expectations? 1-5 scale

If a similar event to the one you reported occurred again, would you reprt it ot the police? Yes / No / Don't know

Based on the reporting of this incident have your views of the Met Police stayed the same / improved / got worse / don't know ?

Telephone only:

Thinking about the attitude and manner of the person who took your full report on the telephone, do you think they

a) communicated clearly? Yes partly / No / Don't know

b) showed empathy? Yes partly / No / Don't know

c) took the matter seriously? Yes partly / No / Don't know

d) resassured you? Yes fully / Yes partly / No / Don't know

Were you given the opportunity to talk about the impact (of the offence) with the person you reported the offence to?

APPENDIX F: Experiment participant exclusion tracker

Week	Theft from MV - T	Theft from MV – C	Theft of MV – T	Theft of MV – C	Other vehicle crime – T	Other vehicle crime – C	Manual excluded – T	Manual excluded –C	Sent to MOPaC – T	Sent to MOPaC – C	MOPaC Exclusion – T	MOPaC Exclusion – C	Total Exclusions – T	Total Exclusions – C	Total Exclusion rate – T	Total Exclusion rate – C	Sent for survey – T	Sent for survey – C
1	199	233	62	70	29	25	30	26	290	328	4	27	34	53	12%	16%	286	301
2	260	250	132	117	40	21	52	43	432	388	52	63	104	106	24%	27%	380	333
3	256	289	121	107	23	30	71	58	400	426	41	56	112	114	28%	24%	359	370
4	256	273	105	107	2	7	88	71	368	387	91	91	179	162	42%	42%	270	296
5	253	248	91	106	-	2	88	78	344	356	22	21	110	99	31%	38%	322	335
6	282	291	134	124	2	-	90	81	418	415	34	34	124	115	28%	28%	384	381
7	223	207	61	80	-	3	73	69	284	290	5	16	78	85	29%	29%	279	274
8	105	137	35	35	-	4	72	63	140	176	(10)	18	62	81	48%	25%	150	158
9	138	150	50	56	-	2	89	77	188	208	18	20	107	97	55%	46%	170	188
10	114	155	41	59	-	1	73	50	155	215	6	43	79	93	60%	43%	149	172
11	139	173	62	46	1	-	64	46	202	219	16	19	80	65	32%	30%	186	200
12	157	193	60	62	1	1	91	56	210	256	16	22	107	78	30%	30%	202	234
13	244	235	73	109	-	6	137	83	317	350	18	36	155	119	37%	34%	299	314
Total	2,626	2,834	1,027	1,078	98	102	1,018	801	3,748	4,014	313	466	1,331	1,267	35%	34%	3,436	3,556

APPENDIX G: Experiment intervention tracker

Week	Treatment Group	Delivered 1st Call	% Delivered 1st Call	% Delivered 2nd Call	% Delivered 3rd Call	Delivered 2nd Call	Delivered 3rd Call	Total treatments delivered	% Treatments delivered	No Response	Incorrect contact details	Excess Treatment	Newsletter sent
1	290	171	65	16	9	41	26	238	90	23	2	27	-
2	432	228	65	19	5	66	19	313	89	35	1	-	-
3	400	187	67	17	8	47	23	257	92	22	-	121	-
4	363	183	68	19	6	50	15	248	93	17	-	98	-
5	344	196	66	19	5	55	16	267	90	28	4	49	85
6	418	188	60	17	6	54	19	261	83	49	3	108	220
7	284	165	64	19	6	50	17	232	89	24	2	28	195
8	140	91	64	15	8	22	12	125	87	17	2	-	118
9	188	89	62	17	6	25	9	123	85	21	1	44	122
10	155	98	63	23	8	35	13	146	94	8	-	1	111
11	202	85	57	20	10	30	15	130	87	20	1	52	116
12	218	124	64	14	13	27	15	166	91	28	-	68	157
13	317	157	62	22	10	55	26	238	94	15	1	64	203
Total	**3,751**	**1,962**	**64%**	**16%**	**8%**	**557**	**225**	**2,744**	**90%**	**307**	**17**	**660**	**1,327**