

25th September 2020

Cost of averted crime explanation

Introduction

Earlier this year, VISAV invited all registered Alert members to provide feedback via a national survey, and we are grateful to the **104,321** members who responded.

One question asked how effective our Alert messages are in preventing crime in the last 12 months.

- 19.8% of respondents said they had taken direct action to help prevent them becoming a victim of crime.
- 40.3% confirmed the information in the messages had helped prevent them from becoming a victim of crime.
- Alerts proved to be most effective in preventing:
 - Cybercrime/other fraud
 - Burglary/theft
 - Doorstep scams

Anecdotal evidence from our members:

Thousands of you provided anecdotal evidence of how Alert messages have prevented you from becoming a victim of crime or enabled you to take action to help prevent becoming a victim of crime, in the last 12 months.

Examples of how Alerts have prevented our members from becoming a victim of crime:

'A man called and told me I needed work doing on my roof and he was in the area that day. I read that there were a few people doing this in my area so I told him I would check with my son first.' (Helena G, Middlesbrough)

'I received an email that was fraudulent but avoided becoming a victim as I was pre-warned by this email service about the specific (fraud) that I would and did receive.' (Arron C, Barnstaple)

'I feel that I have been kept aware of not only doorstep scams but of telephone scams, of which I have had a few and, also more importantly, had somewhere to report the new ones. As I am in my 70s this is like a lifeline.' (Sandra F, Burnley)



Examples of how our Alerts have motivated our members to take action to help prevent them from becoming a victim to crime:

'Regarding the supermarket/handbag fraud, I have been more conscious at hiding my pin and have kept my handbag with me at all times.' (Samantha F, Reading)

'I now close my handbag and fasten it into my trolley when shopping.' (Brenda M, Towcester)

'Now keep my back door locked even when I'm in the kitchen following message about burglaries. Knowing when roads are closed and where there is serious congestion has been useful for organising my own travel.' (Liz S, Exeter)

Cost to society of crime explanation:

We are all too aware of the devastation criminals cause if we are a victim of crime, but have you ever considered the total cost to society of these crimes? The Home Office research explains the costs fall into three main categories:

- 1. In anticipation of crime** – The money individuals and businesses spend on crime detection and prevention, such as burglar/car alarms and CCTV equipment.
- 2. As a consequence of crime** – As you would expect this includes the value of the property stolen or damaged. However, there are other factors to take into consideration such as reduction in quality of life from physical and mental harm, plus lost productivity from time off work for victims. Additionally, the cost to the Health and Victim services.
- 3. In response to crime** – Police and Crown Prosecution Service costs.

Examples from the Home Office findings from "The economic and social costs of crime, Second edition", July 2018:

Doorstep Scam - £1,290

Other Fraud/Cybercrime - £550

Burglary/Theft - £5,930

Concentrating on the types of crime you reported our Alert messages had protected you from, we took the survey data and matched this with the crime costs from the Home Office research, to calculate the projected monetary saving of our Alert messages.

Policing areas:

We also compared data variation across police force areas, as we appreciate some forces are more effective with sharing relevant messages than others. This information, along with other insights about our Alert messages, can be viewed on our website [here](#).

Our methodology to calculating the total cost of crime to society:

Step 1 – We matched up the crime types from our survey with the Home Office research to establish the true cost to society of each crime type. We then calculated the percentage of our respondents who told us they had either taken action or avoided becoming a crime victim as a result of Alert messages.

We did this for eight different crime types, the top three are shown below.

Crime	Cost per crime type (Home office research)	% respondents "taken action"	% respondents reported "prevented crime"
Doorstep scam	£1,290	30.4	69.4
Othe fraud/cybercrime	£550	30.1	69.7
Burglary/ Theft	£5,930	36.0	63.9

Step 2 – We only took 33% of the full cost of each crime type when people said they had taken action, and 25% for those who said Alerts helped prevent them becoming a victim of crime, to create a more realistic cost of crime.

Step 3 - We then filtered all the responses by force area and incident type.

ForceArea	Num	Answer	Researched est. cost of crime type	% of the crime cost if Action is Taken to prevent	% of the crime cost if messages(s) "Helped prevent"	Action Taken Averted Value	Averted Value as msg helped prevent	% Taken Action	% helped prevent	Saving total per type, per force area
Avon and Somerset Constabulary	88	Burglary / Theft	£5,930	0.33	0.25	£1,957	£1,483	36.0	63.9	£145,253
Avon and Somerset Constabulary	120	Doorstep Scam	£1,290	0.33	0.25	£426	£323	30.4	69.4	£42,395
Avon and Somerset Constabulary	14	Fire Prevention	£8,420	0.33	0.25	£2,779	£2,105	34.3	65.4	£32,618
Avon and Somerset Constabulary	26	Health & Safety	£800	0.33	0.25	£264	£200	31.1	68.7	£5,708
Avon and Somerset Constabulary	8	Missing Person	£1,325	0.33	0.25	£437	£331	32.7	67.1	£2,923
Avon and Somerset Constabulary	164	Other Fraud/Cybercrime	£550	0.33	0.25	£182	£138	30.1	69.7	£24,673
Avon and Somerset Constabulary	19	Traffic	£890	0.33	0.25	£294	£223	31.8	68.0	£4,649
Avon and Somerset Constabulary	19	Violent Crime	£10,520	0.33	0.25	£3,472	£2,630	36.3	63.6	£55,720
Avon and Somerset Constabulary		Total averted crime saving		0.33	0.25					£313,939

Step 4 – Using the specific percentages (orange) of the number of people (pink) who answered the survey question, we calculated the value of taking action and averting crime (blue).

Step 5 - Taking into account the 43 police force areas within the UK, the total projected savings to society, delivered due to taking crime prevention action as a result of receiving Neighbourhood Alert messages is **£98.4 million!**

For more information and to review some of the survey responses, please visit this page: <https://www.neighbourhoodalert.co.uk/2020NationalSurvey>