

WHAT IS CRIMESTOPPERS?

Crimestoppers is a national charity which provides an anonymous phone line for members of the public to give any information on crime. The call is free, the caller remains anonymous and a cash reward of up to £1000 is available (enhanced rewards can also be paid for specific high profile crimes). Calls are taken 24/7 by the national call centre, based in Godstone in Surrey.

The telephony hardware is configured so that it is impossible to trace a caller - there is no '1471' facility, caller display or other means of identifying people using the service. Calls are not recorded and no answering machines are used and therefore there is nothing to be disclosed to a Court that might compromise the caller's anonymity.

Anonymous information can now also be given on line via the Charity's website - www.crimestoppers-uk.org Systems are in place to ensure that this information cannot be traced back to the source.

Unless the caller tells people themselves that they contacted Crimestoppers, no one will ever know!

HISTORY

The idea for Crimestoppers originated in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1977. A murder had occurred in a small community but the Police Department was unable to solve the crime, despite it being clear that there were a number of witnesses and people with information. A phone line was set up offering anonymity, hoping to encourage members of the close-knit community to come forward. As a result the Police Department was inundated with calls regarding crimes of all sorts - although not necessarily about the murder!

After the murder of PC Keith Blakelock QGM at Broadwater Farm in London in 1988, Michael (now Lord) Ashcroft KCMG, PC approached the Commissioner to offer his support, and perhaps put up a reward to help catch the killer. Sir Peter Imbert QPM suggested that the scheme he had heard of in America may be well suited to this incident as it likewise involved a community unlikely to engage with the Police. Lord Ashcroft set about developing Crimestoppers in the UK.

HAMPSHIRE & IOW CRIMESTOPPERS

A huge number of calls are made to the Crimestoppers office as a result of the television, radio and newspaper features, and other work that the Hampshire & IOW Crimestoppers team undertake. In 2014/15, **2530** 'actionable' calls were passed to Hampshire Police (calls that give sufficient information for us to be able to use) giving information on crimes, and over **448** people have been arrested as a result. Thousands of pounds worth of drugs and other property was also recovered. These are some of the best figures in the country, which is all thanks to the people of Hampshire and Isle of Wight who take the trouble to call and 'do their bit' for their local community.

Around 95% of calls to Crimestoppers are of use; either leading to an arrest, as a contribution to the intelligence we already hold, or disrupting/impacting on criminal activity. The interference of crime cannot easily be quantified, but clearly calls to Crimestoppers do have a huge impact on this. Not all calls will lead directly to an arrest, but intelligence in addition to that already held is always welcome.

Information passed to Crimestoppers may not be acted upon immediately, so anything of an urgent nature should be dealt with by way of '999' in the usual way.

Remember, if you have any information about local crime or criminals and don't want to get personally involved, call the Crimestoppers number, **0800 555 111**, or log on to www.crimestoppers-uk.org where you can submit any information online and still remain anonymous.