

Guidance note Heritage Crime impact statement

ChurchCare



16,000 buildings. One resource



Heritage crime has wide-ranging effects. Theft and vandalism undoubtedly impact directly on churches, but damage to the fabric of the building and its contents can have a knock-on effect, such as the loss of a local amenity to groups or individuals who use the space.

But it can be hard to explain the impact of heritage crime. The Police or courts may not understand the significance of a church or monument, or the effect the crime has had on a local place or community. An HCIS will allow heritage professionals to personalise the crime and its impact on the church and/or surrounding area.

Uses

There are two different ways in which an HCIS can be used:

Out of court disposals - where the relevant decision makers employ an out of court disposal rather than prosecution, especially in situations where a reparation aimed at bringing victims, offenders and communities

together is being explored. For example:

- Reprimands and final warnings - for young people;
- Conditional Caution/Adult Caution;
- Penalty Notices/Formal Warnings.

Court use - an HCIS is not relevant to the question of guilt and can only be used once a defendant has been found or pleaded guilty. If so, it may then be used to provide the court with essential data to inform sentencing.

Who can give an HCIS?

It is important that the person making the statement can describe how the offending behaviour has resulted in the:

- Loss of historical or architectural, archaeological or artistic information;
- Damage, including direct/indirect harm to the church and/or historic environment as well as the cost of any reparation;
- Reduction in visitor numbers to a historic attraction (where appropriate).

This guidance is issued by the Church Buildings Council under section 55(1)(d) of the Dioceses, Mission and Pastoral Measure 2007. As it is statutory guidance, it must be considered with great care. The standards of good practice set out in the guidance should not be departed from unless the departure is justified by reasons that are spelled out clearly, logically and convincingly.





What information should an HCIS include?

The following information and evidence should be considered for inclusion:

- A description of the heritage asset and/or historic area that is affected by the crime including any designations (local and/or national)
- The significance of the heritage asset or area in both national and local terms where appropriate (whether designated or not)
- If it is designated, an explanation of that designation and what that means
- Impact of the crime on the heritage asset or historic area both direct and indirect, including an assessment of the loss/harm to the asset itself and whether this is reversible or irreversible and also the impact on the wider area
- The cost of reparation
- Specific information from the police and other agencies, indicating the number of times the asset/setting has been subject to crime and anti-social behaviour.
- The number of environmental clean ups required at an historic visitor attraction in order

to remove graffiti, drugs, litter or fly-tipping

- The quantity of reports of crime received by the police, local authority, English Heritage etc. relevant to the historic environment.

To see a good example of a HICS which was used successfully during a metal theft court case, please return to the previous page and click the link.

