

What are informants used for?

- **To infiltrate hostile criminal environments:** Safer alternative than undercover police officers, informants are often already affiliated with the subject
- **To encourage criminals to reveal information that they would not give directly to law enforcement:** Criminals feel more comfortable interacting with people that they know
- **To corroborate and supplement the use of direct or technical surveillance:** Simple surveillance is not enough, human intelligence offers more dynamic intelligence gathering

How are informants recruited by law enforcement?

- **In custody or police interviews:** Investigators will often exaggerate the offences that the suspect will be charged with to encourage cooperation
- **Approached either online or in person unexpectedly (Cold recruiting):** A surveillance team may approach a criminal associate who they think they can build a relationship with to extract intelligence from them

What are the positives of using informants?

- **Identification of vulnerabilities and operational areas inaccessible via directed surveillance or technical attacks:** Informants often have knowledge on how to damage the criminal's operation which police officers do not have
- **Costs in payment are reasonably low:** Although informants are paid, it is very little compared to the value of the information they can provide
- **The power and utility of deception:** Criminals are less likely to be alarmed when interacting with an associate that they know compared to a stranger



Is it a good idea for law enforcement agencies to use juveniles as informants?

- **Ethical and moral implications:** Dismissing and rewarding criminal behaviour
- **Legal restrictions and constraints:** Adult supervision and parental privilege restricts how law enforcement can extract information from juvenile informants
- **Positive uses for law enforcement:** County line gangs primarily use juveniles, easy for them to operate undetected

What are the negatives of using informants?

- **Increasing legal restrictions:** Law enforcement agencies are often constrained on what they can task a CHIS to do, which has led to law enforcement seeing CHIS as less valuable to investigations
- **Lack of experienced handlers and officers:** Dedicated source units have had their budgets cut and agencies have tightened regulations on who can handle CHIS
- **Safety issues:** Handlers and authorising officers are liable for the safety of their CHIS

Case Study (2022):
 M15 misled multiple courts about informant who abused women
 The legislation that public authorities are bound by concerning the safety of informants can sometimes cause major issues with public trust

Legislation

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