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North East

CrimeAlert

Keeping Communities in the North East Safe



January - February 2023



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Welcome to the January edition of North East Crime Alert.

A bi-monthly bulletin produced by the Police Scotland North East Division Crime Reduction Team aimed at keeping you up to date with what's happening in our community.

In this edition of North East Crime Alert

We look at why catalytic converters are being stolen and how to avoid becoming a victim.

We explain why used cooking oil being stolen from across the North East.

North East Division Adult Protection Co-ordinator Alison Lynch discusses financial harm and the signs to look out for.

In the first of a new series we bring real life accounts from victims of crime in the North East.

As well as a regular round-up of crime in the North East.

From the latest frauds and scams, to general security measures, each issue will bring you advice on how to keep your property safe.

Crime across Scotland is increasing and criminals are using ever more sophisticated methods. By working in partnership we can make our communities a safer place to live and work.

New Divisional Commander for North East Division



A new Divisional Commander has been appointed in the North East. Chief Superintendent Graeme Mackie started in his new role on Monday, 28 November 2022 and will be responsible for all policing in North East Division and its command areas – Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray.

Chief Superintendent Mackie joined Grampian Police in 1995 and has worked in various uniformed and CID roles across the region including in Aberdeen, Peterhead and Stonehaven. In 2014 he was promoted to Chief Inspector and the Local Area Commander for Aberdeen City South, which included the city centre of Aberdeen. Chief Superintendent Mackie served in this role for more than three years, developing and enhancing the partnership working in the city-centre and supporting the city achieve Purple Flag status.

In 2017, he was promoted to Detective Superintendent within Police Scotland's Major Investigation team, overseeing all homicide and major crime investigations across the North East, Highlands & Islands and Tayside.

Assistant Chief Constable, Emma Bond, said: "I am delighted to welcome Chief Superintendent Mackie back to North East Division. He has spent his entire policing career in the North East, most recently working in the Major Investigation Team alongside Division, and has an excellent understanding of the issues impacting our communities. Policing in Scotland is not without its challenges currently and I know Chief Superintendent Mackie will be an asset to the command team, bringing his wealth of experience to supporting our local communities and inspiring officers and staff."

Chief Superintendent Graeme Mackie added: "I am extremely proud to have been appointed as the next Divisional Commander for North East Division, and am committed to building on the excellent work already underway to ensure our communities receive the best service possible. For me personally, this is an incredible opportunity to help strengthen the trust and confidence communities have in their police, finding innovative approaches to solving problems and keeping people safe. "I look forward to supporting the incredible work our officers, staff and volunteers already do on a daily basis and hope to meet with our partners as soon as possible to further strengthen well-established relationships. Above all, I look forward to getting to know our communities better and delivering on the priorities you tell us matter to you most."



In December 2022 nine vehicle's in Aberdeen had their catalytic converters stolen in one night by three suspects equipped with a trolley jack and an angle grinder.

Catalytic Converters form part of a vehicles exhaust system and help to reduce emissions. They are stolen because they contain precious metals that have shot up in value in recent years giving them a high scrap metal value.

What is a catalytic converter?

The catalytic converter is housed in a box in the car's exhaust system. It cleans up exhaust gases before they are expelled from the exhaust pipe. All new cars sold in Europe since 1993 have had to be fitted with a catalytic converter by law.

The situation has been exacerbated by a rise in the value of the precious metals found in catalytic converters which include palladium and rhodium. Both are more expensive than gold which is worth approximately £1500 per ounce. Palladium is worth around £1794 per ounce, rhodium more than £12,259 and platinum about £771 per ounce.

(Source-What Car? Magazine August 2022)

There are steps that can be taken to try and prevent this from happening -

Choose where to park your car carefully

Where possible park your car in a locked garage. If you don't have the luxury of off-street parking or you're not at home, you should park with the side of the car closest to the catalytic converter near to a fence, wall, high kerb or other vehicles and avoid mounting the pavement on two wheels.

Boost your home security

To boost your home security, you can invest in sturdy garage doors, CCTV systems and even alarms for your driveway. Kit out your property with three things in mind:

Prevention

Try fitting reinforced garage doors or adding a motion-triggered security light overlooking your drive. A combination of both will help to deter would-be thieves before they strike.

Detection

CCTV cameras will help you to gather evidence during a theft. Ensure they work under low light or in the dark and provide some notification.

Your reaction

For true peace of mind, consider products approved by Secure by Design (SBD). The police-owned initiative provides a recognised standard for security products that can deter and reduce crime. Not all safety features have to involve top-of-the-range technology.

You can try adding gravel or other loose material to your drive to deter intruders from stepping foot on your property.



Add a lock, guard or alarm to your vehicle

Locks and guards for the underside of cars are also available. However, you should declare the security features with your insurance provider and check if adding one might affect a future claim. Consider using tilt sensors to detect if your car is being lifted by a jack before it sounds an audible alarm.

Mark your catalytic converter

You can ask a garage to add a serial number to your catalytic converter too. The Scrap Metal Dealers Act requires that dealers check

the identity of sellers against the unique code. You'll also receive a window sticker indicating that your catalytic converter has been marked – another way to deter potential thieves.

Report suspicious activity to the police

It may seem obvious but contacting the police is one of the best ways to prevent catalytic converter theft. If the situation isn't an emergency, try calling the police on 101 or use the 'Contact Us' option on the Police Scotland website.



Why is used cooking oil being stolen from businesses across the North East?

FISH & CHIPS

The price of cooking oil this year rocketed to almost four times higher than the start of 2019. Poor harvests in South America, labour shortages as a result of the pandemic, the demand for biofuel and the war in Ukraine are all reasons why the value of cooking oil has grown exponentially. This sharp increase in value has incentivised thieves to steal used cooking oil - now referred to as 'liquid gold.'

Ukraine supplies nearly half of the sunflower oil we use globally with a further 25% coming from Russia. The war has interrupted much-needed shipments to the rest of the world and sent the price of cooking oil through the roof.

In the UK we grow our own crops to make cooking oil. However we don't harvest nearly enough to supply the country with the volume we need to keep our food establishments going. Care homes and hospitals also rely on regular, reasonably-priced cooking oil supplies in order to function and so this change in value has impacted almost everyone.

Organised criminals are actively targeting commercial premises throughout Scotland and across the United Kingdom. By law businesses are required to arrange recycling of used cooking oils. Criminals are now exploiting this process and either pretending to be legitimate recycling companies or targeting insecure premises to steal the oil before it can be recycled. Businesses can be paid up to 40p per litre for used oil so they are losing out on a valuable income.

Businesses are urged to review their security and processes for disposing of cooking oils to prevent them being targeted by thieves. Consider the following steps:

Ask suppliers for locking barrels.

Many cooking oil barrels have a securing ring around the top which can be padlocked to prevent siphoning.

Ensure CCTV cameras and security lighting are installed to help deter thieves.

Keep used oil barrels indoors if it is safe to do so or ensure they are out of reach of opportunistic thieves.

Regular monitoring of used cooking oil levels will indicate if a theft has occurred. Alarms can be installed in containers if they fall below a certain level.

As the cost of living continues to soar, we know that some motorists may be tempted to fill their fuel tanks with seemingly cheap biofuels. However in the long term use of such products can be harmful to modern diesel engines as they can clog fuel injectors and emission control devices.

Let's talk about

Financial Harm

By Alison Lynch

North East Division Adult Protection Co-ordinator

Financial harm is when someone's money or possessions are stolen or they have been defrauded out of property. It comes in many forms and it is often someone known to the person - friends or family - who is the culprit.



Let's Talk About Financial Harm

By Alison Lynch

North East Division Adult Protection Co-ordinator

In the first of a three part series Alison Lynch, North East Division Adult Protection Co-ordinator, discusses different types of financial harm and what to look out for.

Financial harm is when someone's money or possessions are stolen or they have been defrauded out of property. When it is mentioned, it is often in the guise of scams - either over the phone or online - or rogue traders or bogus workmen turning up at the door, carried out by people who are unknown to the victim. In reality, financial harm comes in many forms and it is often someone known to the person - friends or family - who is the culprit.

Friends and family, can have access to much more than a bank account, they can have access to cash or possessions too. Some people might find it easy to disregard the dodgy email or hang up the phone on an unknown person but find it much more difficult, if not impossible, to say no to a son or daughter, spouse or other person they have an emotional tie to. There can be other factors in play too, such as threats – veiled or otherwise – of what might happen if the money is not forthcoming or coercive control where one displays behaviours that exert power over another through fear and control which can be seen in cases of domestic abuse.

So what can this include?

The obvious harm is the appropriation of money. This can be via a bank card for cash withdrawals, purchases in person or online, or a bank account, also for online purchases or other activities such as gambling. It could be as simple as doing someone's shopping, buying 'buy one get one free' items and the 'get one free' item is kept by the shopper.

There is also the misuse of benefits where money is used to buy items that don't benefit the individual, for example, buying a Motability car that is unsuitable for the individual's needs. Persuading someone to change their will in favour of an individual can be another way.

But it isn't just confined to spending someone's money. It can be the selling of property – anything that is owned by an individual – persuading them to sell their house or selling it from under them if they don't have capacity - or taking family heirlooms or other knick-knacks.

People can be more susceptible to financial harm when they get older. They might not be as able to deal with finances the way they used to and look to others to support them. They can be befriended by someone whose intentions are less than honourable and this can lead to houses being signed over or wills being changed in favour of the befriender.



Let's Talk About Financial Harm

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What to look for

There are a number of ways to spot potential financial harm, some of which will be easier than others. If there is legitimate access to a bank account check it regularly for payments for goods the individual would or could not use, spends or cash withdrawals from shops or other business, again they could not or would not use. Look for newly set up direct debits – regardless of the amount and note any dwindling of cash.

There might be unpaid bills, these could also be spotted through a bank account, but also by letters. Look for reminders of unpaid bills. Has the electric, gas or phone been disconnected or not being used as much? Is there plenty of food in the house or has there been a reduction in the amount bought or is available? This can be tricky to tell at the moment due to the cost of living crisis but don't be afraid to ask if this is the case. There is support out there regardless of the reason.

Financial harm can have a profound effect on the individual too. From paying bills in plenty of time to being unable to pay them at all can cause untold distress and anxiety. As can being bullied, cajoled or blackmailed into handing over cash.

A reduction in personal care or change in appearance can be another sign as people could be unable to afford food or personal care items, or lack motivation due to depression.

An increase in alcohol use can also be a sign.

Such is the effect of financial harm on individuals, it is suspected to have caused premature death in older people, not to mention suicide / suicidal thoughts in others.

Who can help?

The Bank

Contact the bank for assistance. They can block payments, stop cards and even cap the amount of money that can be withdrawn at any one time. If ATM use is an issue then arrangements can be made for over the counter withdrawals only.

The Police

Misappropriation of funds or property could be a criminal offence.

Your Local Authority

If the adult is vulnerable and possibly being financially harmed then make a referral to their adult protection unit. An enquiry will be carried out and if appropriate, supports put in place. This could include ensuring benefits are being used for their intended purpose, or assisting in the application for guardianship should the person be assessed as lacking the ability to deal with their own financial affairs.

Office of the Public Guardian

Can investigate financial harm but only if the person does not have capacity. They can also investigate concerns about financial guardians.

The important thing is to do something to try and help.

For further advice please contact the Harm Reduction Unit at - NorthEastHarmReduction@scotland.police.uk

Enjoy online gaming securely



The Online gaming industry is colossal both in terms of its' scale and reach, and for many people online gaming is a huge part of their online activities, in-fact it is *estimated that a staggering 700 million people play online games.

*comScore data cited by Spil Games.

When we consider that the internet is not hindered by physical or geographical boundaries, the reality is that we can be gaming with anyone from a close friend to people from any part of the world. We have to be aware either as adults, children and young people and our most vulnerable when gaming, do we really know who we are gaming with, who we have shared personal information with in team chats or have even struck up a relationship with away from the gaming platform, having only met online.

Whilst gaming in itself is a relatively enjoyable experience it is safer when we know who we are gaming with. There is no doubt that online criminals use gaming platforms to coerce and manipulate genuine gamers in order to turn any situation to their advantage.

The following link to the NCSC will help you to enjoy online gaming securely and will help prevent you falling victim to an online criminal.

Online gaming for families and individuals - www.ncsc.gov.uk

For those with younger family members, online gaming can be an added stress with concerns about cyberbullying, excessive time spent playing online games, to unscrupulous games which encourage children to pay for improved avatars or other content. The following links, to our trusted partners, will provide you with support and guidance including what parents and carers need to know, gaming safety tips and understanding online games.

Gaming: What parents and carers need to know

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Online gaming safety tips for parents / Buying a games console for your child

www.internetmatters.org

Understanding online games

www.nspcc.org.uk

Information from Police Scotland Cybercrime Harm Prevention Team

PPCWCyberHarmPrevention@scotland.police.uk

IT'S SIMPLE **LOCK IT** OR LOSE IT

Does someone have their eye
on your new Christmas bike?
Lock it or lose it.

Register your bike for free at
www.bikeregister.com



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Hardened boron alloy steel closed shackle
The 'shackle' is protected in the body of the padlock giving cut and twist resistance

Anti-drill protection on cylinder

Solid hardened steel lock body

Anti-corrosion storm proof cover

SQUIRE
Lockmakers Since 1780

What makes a good padlock?

The North East Crime Reduction team always recommend using a 'closed shackle padlock' but what exactly does that mean?



Friends Against Scams is a National Trading Standards initiative designed to inspire action, highlight the scale of the problem, change the perceptions of why people fall for scams and make scams a community, regional and national topic.

By completing free online training anyone can learn about the different types of scams and how to spot and support a victim. With increased knowledge and awareness people can make scams part of everyday conversation with their family, friends and neighbours, which will enable them to protect themselves and others.

After the training you will be asked to start taking action to take a stand against scams. This could be as simple as talking to your neighbours, friends or family about scams.

The interactive online learning session, can be done in the comfort of your own home or at work.

To complete the online learning session visit

www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/training/friends-elearning

The training can take less than 30 minutes and you can even claim a Friends Against Scams certificate.

Friends Against Scams Organisations

Friends Against Scams (FAS) organisations come from a range of business sectors, charities and Government agencies. A FAS organisation will make a pledge to support the initiative by raising awareness. This could be through staff training, customer interaction and/or social media. If you think your organisation might be interested in signing up to it more information can be found at www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/FASorganisation

If you have received an email you're not sure about forward it to the Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS): report@phishing.gov.uk

You can report spam text messages via your mobile phone provider free of charge by forwarding the text message to **7726**.

Take Five is a national campaign that offers impartial advice to help everyone protect themselves from financial fraud.

www.takefive-stopfraud.org.uk/advice/general-advice/

We have some top tips about booking holidays and travel safely online. Read them before you start searching for your next break.



If you pay by bank transfer, you could lose your money *and* your holiday. When possible, always pay by credit card.



Get Safe Online's 'Holiday and Travel Booking' campaign

Fraudsters use fake websites, listings, emails, advertisements, social media posts, texts and phone calls to trick you into buying and paying for what you think is a genuine holiday. Whereas what you might actually get is a disappointed family and no chance of getting your money back.

To help avoid this happening, Get Safe Online have put together a leaflet containing some expert tips on safely searching and booking holidays and travel with confidence - attached to this month's email along with North East Crime Alert.



www.getsafeonline.org/holidaybooking

#HolidayBooking



Retail Crime Advice

In January this year two males were charged with theft from several retail outlets across Aberdeen.

Their 'MO' was to work in pairs. While one distracted staff with conversation the other would steal items from the store.

The use of accomplices is common amongst shoplifters. A number of different distraction techniques can be used to draw the attention of shop staff and customers to a fictitious incident whilst other members of the gang steal from the premises. Retailers are reminded to look out for people who stand in front of others to act as a shield or engage staff in meaningless conversation while an associate steals.



The National Business Crime Centre has commissioned a series of videos designed as a training aid for those working in the retail sector to empower employees in the areas of personal safety and de-escalation, saying no - refusing service, deterring and interacting with thieves and handling disruptive behaviour.

<https://nbcc.police.uk/business-support/shopworker-videos>

Scam Update #7

Ransomware Attacks



This month a company within the oil and gas sector in Aberdeen was subjected to a Ransomware attack.

Ransomware is a type of malware which prevents access to certain files. Often the files are encrypted, so they cannot be opened and can only be decrypted if a ransom is paid, often in the form of Bitcoin.

Ransomware attacks are on the rise because they are often disguised as legitimate files and are also known as a Trojan attack. Once the malicious files are installed the malware infects the network it has gained access to.

Global brands have been targeted by hacking groups, often using WastedLocker malware, and some have ended up paying out millions of dollars.

Be cyber aware and encourage staff to be suspicious of unusual emails. These are the easiest method for hackers to get into a network.

Emails create a revolving door of information exchange that is vital for business but also creates an attack vector for unauthorised access to a device or network.

Further Information

The Scottish Business Resilience Centre have published a detailed guide to Ransomware which is attached to this months Crime Alert. Further information and various security assessments for your business can be found at -

www.sbrcentre.co.uk/prevent-protect/cyberservices



In a new series we will bring you first hand experiences from victims of crime from across the North East.

Bill could never understand why people were constantly being caught out by frauds and scams and always thought to himself 'I'll never be scammed.'

Early last year Bill became intrigued by all the publicity surrounding Bitcoin. He started to look online, read articles, looked at websites and checked comments before deciding on making contact with an investment company. He checked a review website and read positive feedback.

Bill contacted the company and spoke with Jason; an American male in his 30's. Bill spoke to him several times and researched the information provided before he decided to open an account and install the software on his laptop. Having issues installing the software, Jason offered to help but in order to do so, Bill had to give him remote access to his laptop which he did.

Bill continued to monitor bitcoin and opened up an online bank account. At the request of Jason and to avoid paying tax on any profit Bill deposited £250 to check the system. Jason kept in regular contact, not pushing for him to invest any money, just keeping him updated and engaging him in conversation around general life. 6 months later Bill mentioned he needed money for an emergency purchase. Jason suggested that he invest £6K. Markets were on the rise and Jason could see a potential profit of £4K in a matter of weeks given his initial £250 was allegedly now worth £1600. Bill transferred the money into his online bank account and waited.

Several days passed. Bill heard nothing so phoned Jason. The number was disconnected and there was no reply to e-mails or WhatsApp. On checking his online account he found the balance was £1 and that his £5999 had gone.

Bill felt physically sick. It took him days to get over what happened and he has now taken another job in order to try and replace the money lost. He felt like he had 'been groomed' by Jason who spent time gaining his confidence and trust. On checking the digital review platform Bill discovered all the negative reviews for the company had been removed and came across numerous other people who had been scammed. Bill is resigned to the fact he has lost his money with no chance of ever getting it back.

How could this incident have been prevented?

Don't be fooled by a slick looking website.

Gone are the days of easily identifiable online fraudsters hiding behind poorly executed websites. A modern fraudulent website will look just as professional as legitimate sites. Research websites thoroughly prior to investing money.

Not all online bank accounts have the same cover and security if you become a victim of fraud. Always fully investigate they are regulated and will provide you with the financial security you need should the worst happen.

Fraudsters often take control of where money is invested. They will often send your money to the 'investment' E-wallet so that they can direct money to various Cryptocurrency investments. Alternatively they may ask you to download remote access software so they can do the work for you. **This is a major red flag as fraudsters can then access all your information or leave software to monitor everything you do.**



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What's happening in Aberdeenshire

On 10th November a resident in the Torphins area was victim to an ebay fraud. The victim paid a 4 figure deposit for a van advertised on ebay which was not delivered.

An Aberdeenshire resident fell victim to a Bitcoin scam on 11th November and transferred over £5,000 to fraudulent Bitcoin Investment Company.

On 11th November a 17 year old Aberdeenshire male engaged in conversation with an unknown person via social media. The person attempted to extort £1000 or they would send naked images of the male to all his friends and contacts.

On 15th November a retail premises in Huntly was broken into and two charity collection tins stolen.

Man charged with housebreaking

Following our previous appeal after an attempted housebreaking at a property in the Faulkner Avenue area of Laurencekirk on Saturday 19th November a 26-year-old man has been arrested and charged in connection with this incident. The incident was captured on the householders CCTV system and immediate notification sent to their mobile phone.

On 23rd November an Ifor Williams trailer valued at £3500 was stolen from a farm near to Stonehaven.

On 29th November a Banchory resident was defrauded of £1000 after seeing camera equipment for sale on Marketplace. The money was sent but the equipment never arrived.

Attempted Robbery, Boddam

Detectives are appealing for information after a delivery driver was the victim of an attempted robbery on Dundonnie Street, Boddam on Saturday, 10 December. Around 4.30pm, the 38-year-old man got into his blue Ford Transit van, when he was approached by three men who had got out of a dark-coloured SUV-style vehicle. They demanded cash from the him, however they were unsuccessful and fled a short time later. The three suspects are described as being of slim build and wearing dark-coloured clothing and balaclavas.

Heating Fuel Thefts

2000 litres of kerosene heating fuel was taken from a rural property in the Gartly area between Friday 9th and Sunday 11th December.

£500 of Kerosene heating fuel was taken from a tank located within the garden of a rural property near Alford between 11th and 21st December.

Outreach Initiative

On Monday 12th December, the latest two-day outreach programme in Banff, Fraserburgh, Huntly and Turriff was supported by staff from a combination of Social Work, NHS, Housing, Community Safety and Police. Teams undertook around 126 house visits and engaged with 55 vulnerable individuals in the north-east towns.

North East College Wellbeing Day

On Thursday 24th November 2022, officers were at North East Scotland College, Fraserburgh meeting students and staff at the Health & Wellbeing open day. It was an excellent opportunity to engage with students and staff and we wish them all the best in their studies. Partners agencies at the event included SAMH, NHS Grampian, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, GREC, Aberdeenshire Council, Fraserburgh Men's shed, Student Well-being and Penumbra Mental health.

Scottish Land and Estates

On Monday 14 November 2022, North East Crime Reduction officers were at the Scottish Land & Estates regional members reception in Finzean, Banchory. Was great opportunity to engage with members and discuss rural crime prevention.

Lumsden Primary School

Did you see our Huntly officers on Tuesday 8 November at Lumsden Primary School? Some of the pupils collaborated with us to implement Police Scotland's Safer School Initiative. The initiative is aimed at drivers to

make them aware of the importance of speed limits and the dangers that speeding near the school can have on the children and other members of the public. A total of ten vehicles were stopped during their hour long patrol. Those drivers were given advice from the school pupils about the potential consequences their speed may have. The initiative will continue to take place around schools in the community and attention given to these areas.

On 2nd December a couple in Rhynie lost £3000 to a WhatsApp fraud having received a text claiming to be from their daughter.

On 3rd December a charity bucket containing a three figure sum of money was stolen from a retail premises in Stonehaven.

Rural Crime Event

On Monday 12th December, Officers attended the North East Rural Crime Event in Portsoy. Chief Inspector Simon Reid opened the event aimed at offering advice and support to Farmers and those working in agriculture. Attendees were given crime prevention advice from the Crime Reduction team and the Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime (SPARC). North East Police Cybercrime Team gave advice about staying safe online and protecting your business.

On 1st January a male in Peterhead was charged and reported to the Procurator Fiscal after being found in possession of a quantity of stolen power tools and copper piping.

A male has been charged with Livestock Worrying offences after a number of animals were killed by two dogs on a farm near Peterhead on 3rd January.

On 6th January a Foveran resident lost £110 after attempting to purchase concert tickets via Twitter.



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What's happening in Moray

Drink and Drug Drive Campaign

North East Road Policing officers have been continuing high visibility patrols, driver and vehicle checks on northeast roads as part of the Festive Drink and Drug Drive Campaign and Operation CEDAR (Challenge, Educate, Detect and Reduce) which aims to address poor driving standards and prevent road deaths. During checks more than 60 vehicles were stopped and checked and where appropriate drivers tested for alcohol and drugs. Drink or drug driving results in the unnecessary loss of life or horrific life changing injuries to not only the drivers but their passengers and other road users. Officers remain committed to tackling these offenders who flout the law without a care for others.

Between 6.30pm on Thursday 3rd November and 7.45am on Friday 4th November, a motor vehicle was stolen on Calcots Road, Elgin. The silver Peugeot 207 was recovered nearby damaged. Anyone with information should contact Police quoting 0644 of 04/11/2022.

A 22-year-old man has been charged in relation to a vandalism at Cooper Park, Elgin on Saturday 15th October. He has been released to appear at Elgin Sheriff Court at a later date.

UHI Moray Event

On Monday 28th November Officers from the Crime Reduction Team and Children and Young Person Team attended UHI Moray, for the Health & Wellbeing Open Day. It was an excellent opportunity to engage with students and staff about various topics, including cybercrime, hate crime and signpost students to other services. We wish the students all the best in their studies.

Food Bank Initiative

Chase The Police Dog was out with officers on Saturday 10th December to support Moray Food Plus and was collecting food donations from families in the New Elgin area. Food donations were passed on to Moray Food Plus to help with the demand around the festive period. Find out more about Moray Food Plus here : <http://morayfoodplus.org.uk/>

Joint Patrols with Royal Air Force

Officers from Lossiemouth Community Policing team carried out joint high visibility patrols with Royal Air Force Police Officers during the World Cup to keep our communities safe. Sergeant Michelle MacDonald from Lossiemouth Community Policing Team (CPT) said "We are always happy to patrol with our military colleagues and appreciate our continuing partnership. We have had a lot of positive engagement with the licensees and people out socialising."

On Saturday 17th December Police Scotland launched their Festive Policing Operation in Moray with partnership agencies, Moray Council Health and Social Care Moray Arrows - A Quarriers Service and Scotia Medical Group. These agencies were supported by officers from our Divisional Alcohol and Violence Reduction Unit (DAVRU), the Community Investigation Team and Divisional Community Policing Team (CPT) officers.

Police are appealing for witnesses following a serious assault which happened in New Elgin. The assault happened within a licensed premises on Thornhill Road between 7pm and 8pm on Saturday, 17th December.

A 52-year-old man was taken to Dr. Gray's Hospital for treatment. Officers are keen to speak with a man who is described as being aged around 25 years old, six foot tall, wearing a white hooded top and white cap. He was in the company of a slightly older man and two women.

Officers in Keith are appealing for information in relation to a grey Ford Puma being damaged on Turner Street, Keith, about 12am on Sat 24th December.

Police are appealing for information following the attempted theft of a cable drum from the Network Rail yard at Keith Railway Station on Tuesday 3rd January. Around 11.45 pm on Tuesday night three men were disturbed by a member of staff attempting to load the cable into a trailer. They fled the scene in a Subaru Forester, minus the trailer, driving off towards the A96 towards Elgin.

About 1045pm on Saturday 7th January several drums of cooking oil were stolen from a licenced premises at Regent Square, Keith. Police are appealing for members of the public who saw a white transit van in the area at that time and anyone who has dash cam or CCTV.



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What's happening in Aberdeen

Retail Crime Initiative

In the run up to Christmas, the North East Division Crime Reduction Team launched a new retail crime initiative to help support local businesses across the North East. As part of the initiative, a new retail crime guide was designed to help staff identify some of the methods used by shoplifters, along with prevention advice and guidance on personal safety. A list of support agencies and foodbanks in the North East also forms part of the new guide. Local community officers, the Crime Reduction Team and the City Centre Problem Solving Team will deliver the guide to retailers across the North East along with the offer of specialist training for staff.

Drugs Offences

Police Scotland can confirm two men, aged 44 and 21, have been arrested and charged in connection with drug offences as part of a joint operation with Merseyside Police. Officers executed a warrant at an address in Gardner Road, Aberdeen, on Friday, 4 November, 2022, following an intelligence-led investigation. Quantities of crack cocaine, cocaine, diamorphine, cash and drug dealing paraphernalia were seized, with a combined estimated street value of £50,000.

Drugs worth more than £4,000 have been recovered after searches carried out by officers in Aberdeen. Warrants were executed at Northsea Court on Friday, 23 December, resulting in quantities of crack cocaine, heroin and morphine being seized. Three men, aged 33, 35, 36 and one woman aged 23, have been arrested and charged in connection with the recoveries. They are all due to appear at Aberdeen Sheriff Court at a later date.

Between 20th and 26th December two homes in Aberdeen, a flat and a semi-detached house, were broken into during the hours of 0800 and 2100 and a large sums of cash and jewellery were taken from both addresses. On both occasions entry was forced.

In early December an Aberdeen resident received what she thought was a call from her bank regarding suspicious activity on her account. Believing the very convincing caller to be genuine she went on to transfer and ultimately lose £50,000.

An Aberdeen male was caught off guard during a call regarding Cryptocurrency investment, he admitted to sending the £1,000.00 money due to the pressure by female suspects on the phone, harassing him to invest.

An Aberdeen firm lost £30,000 to a fraudulent company requesting engineering components. It appears that the companies details had been compromised and the details obtained have been used to pretend to place orders by false means. They obtained money for this without the knowledge of the compromised company while gaining monetary gain.

Police have seen numerous bikes stolen in recent weeks with Aberdeen. The majority have been left unlocked whilst others have had very poor quality locks fitted which were easily overcome. As a rule of thumb expect to spend at least 10% of the value of the bike on security to ensure its safe keeping.

A building site in south Aberdeen was broken into in December in the early hours of a Wednesday morning. A security fence was cut and entry forced into a container, where upon a power washer and rolls of lead were stolen.

Upcycling Initiative

During last year, North East Crime Reduction worked in partnership with Robert Gordon University and Camphill School Aberdeen in relation to bike and general security. Forty five bicycles that were surplus to requirements at the RGU Bike Pad have been donated to Camphill School to be upcycled or used for spares. Nico Ramirez from Camphill Schools Aberdeen, 'We deliver a bicycle maintenance and repair workshop to provide learning opportunities for children and young people aged up to 25 years old. We also receive donations of old bicycles for upcycling or recycling spare parts. This project has significantly grown over the past years and is also part of CSA's Social Enterprise model, aiming to offer servicing and repairs to the public.' Manas Disoriya works as the campus cycling officer at Robert Gordon University 'The Go Green group manages the Bike Pad workshop where we rent out bikes, allowing staff and students to hire bikes for a semester or a whole year.

Northfield Church

On 14 November 2022 Local Police Team, Sergeant Victoria Thomson and Constable Abbey Montgomery visited the Northfield UF Church to provide information and advice on security, both at home and in the community, to the Women's Association. They thereafter spent some time carrying out general community engagement with the ladies, answering all manner of queries and concerns. The feedback was that everyone thoroughly enjoyed hearing the input and were grateful for the information provided. Our officers were grateful for the tea and cake in addition to the positive engagement, thank you.

Craibstone Event

On Tuesday 29th November 2022, North East Crime Reduction team officers spent the day at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) Craibstone. They were joined by staff from Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime (SPARC). First year agriculture students learned about the risks of crime in the rural environment and the latest security equipment available for farmers. Many thanks to all those who attended and their enthusiasm throughout the day.

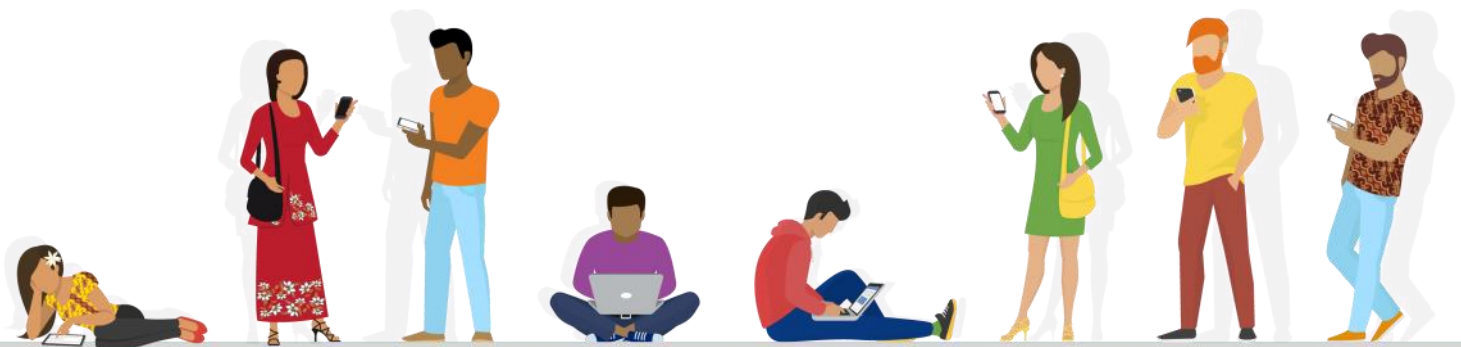


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Keeping Our Communities in the North East Safe

Police Scotland's North East Division covers rural and urban areas in Moray, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City. The division has five territorial command areas which have their own dedicated Area Commander, who is responsible for the daily policing function. Each command area is served by a number of community policing teams whose activities are built around the needs of the local community. These teams respond to local calls and look for long term solutions to key issues. They are assisted by the division's Crime Reduction Unit who deliver against

Force and local priorities in a number of areas, including physical and social crime prevention, supporting and enhancing community engagement and creating and sustaining strong and effective partnership working.

Website

www.scotland.police.uk

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