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# Business Watch

## Police Scotland Business Advice

March 2021

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Should this bulletin be sent to one of your colleagues as well as you? If you are 'moving on' please let us know a new contact within your company to send the bulletin to.

If you have any sister companies or businesses you work closely with who you think would benefit from this bulletin (check with them first) then please let us know.

If you no longer wish to receive this bulletin then please let us know at [NorthEastCrimeReduction@Scotland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:NorthEastCrimeReduction@Scotland.pnn.police.uk)

**URGENT MESSAGES WILL BE SENT OUT AS APPROPRIATE**

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### Shed and Outbuilding Security

There have been a number of thefts from garages and sheds across the Division in the past month.

This has included bicycles and other items either chained within or sometimes left insecure.

Criminals know that many people store valuable items like bicycles, power tools and golf clubs in their shed.

Often, the sheds are either left unlocked or have poorly fitted locks and weathered or damaged doors.

Consider how easily you can access your rear garden. If it is easy for you, it will be easy for a thief.

The following advice may help to keep your property secure:

- Protect the boundary and access of your garden with a hedge or fence at a height of 2 metres is a good barrier. Fit a strong, lockable, high gate across the passageway to stop a thief getting to the back of your

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home. Consider additional sliding bolts to enhance security. Thieves don't like gravel, it's noisy to walk on.

- Make sure external lighting covers your shed or outbuilding
- Secure windows internally with steel mesh or bars
- Put up net curtains to obscure the view through the windows
- Use a SoldSecure padlock and robust hasp to secure the door
- Fit coach bolts to external door hinges and exposed hasp fittings
- Fit a battery or mains operated burglar alarm
- Consider storing higher value items in a more robustly secured area, for instance the garage or house.

If this is not feasible:-

- Install a locking cabinet or cage for high value items and ensure it is anchored.
- For bicycles, use a ground anchor to secure the bike(s) to.
- Security mark, etch or paint your postcode onto valuable items
- Photograph items and check your home insurance policy to ensure these items are covered.

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## Bike Thefts

There have been several thefts of bicycles across the North East Division Policing area in the past month. A leaflet providing advice and information on bike security has been attached with the email.

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## Crime Prevention Advice - Rural Businesses

Police are warning rural businesses in Aberdeenshire to remain vigilant following break-ins to businesses near Turriff, St Cyrus and Ellon between 25 February and 2 March 2021.

Businesses are advised to look at their buildings through the eyes of a thief. Start by looking at the grounds of the business and think about lighting, signage and fencing. Are there any loose objects or tools lying about within the grounds which could be used by thieves to help force entry to the premises?

CCTV is a useful tool but it must be remembered that CCTV on its own is not a deterrent to criminality and should always be combined with appropriate physical security. Ensure all external doors are of solid construction, with suitable locks or a closed shackle padlock fitted.

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Consider forensically marking all your tools. Many kits are readily available and extremely cost effective. This combined with visible signage will help deter potential criminals. It also assists in tracing them back to their owners. Many companies provide free tool registers, via smartphone apps, which help remove the market for stolen goods. This is also a good method of retaining all the tool details such as model and serial number as well as photographs.

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### Ringling the Changes – Money Changing Scam

This is a type of fraud which involves the suspect asking for a sum of cash to be changed into notes of a different denomination, for example 10 x £20 notes changed to 20 x £10.

Once the cashier has counted out the cash and handed it to the suspect, the suspect will usually count the money again in front of the cashier and use a sleight of hand technique as he/she is doing so, in order to steal some of the money.

The suspect will then ask the cashier to change the money again, often into an outlandish denomination such as 10p pieces. The cashier will refuse and it is at this point that the suspect will then ask for his/her original money back.

The cashier assumes that the suspect is handing back the full amount and exchanges it for the original money. The offender leaves with the original money, plus whatever they stole during the sleight of hand trick.

The scam often goes unnoticed until the tills are cashed at the end of the day. 'Ringling the changes' usually happens during busy times which adds to the confusion and places extra pressure on staff.

#### What to do to prevent becoming a victim

Increase awareness among your staff and follow these simple tips:

- Refuse to exchange notes and adopt a 'no change' or 'one note only' policy.
- Be vigilant and report any suspicious behaviour to the Police.
- If you have CCTV, ensure that it is working correctly and is capable of identifying potential suspects.
- Display a poster in the window saying this store does not change money.
- If your store does have to exchange money e.g. Bureau de Change, ensure that staff count and recount any money handed over by the suspect. The scam is reliant on the cashier assuming that they have been given back the original amount.

#### Remember:

- Staff are under no obligation to change denominations of cash for customers.
  - Legitimate customers wanting change for a valid reason will often make a small purchase in order to get change.
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## **Raising Awareness of Abuse of Retail Staff**

Crimestoppers, The Scottish Grocers' Federation and Scottish Government have launched a joint campaign aimed at highlighting the impact of abuse, threats or violence on Scotland's retail staff and encouraging people to speak up about violence and abuse. Details of the campaign are available on the Crimestoppers Scotland website or by clicking [here](#).

Campaign images and animations are available [here](#).

## **Trading Standards Scotland Bulletin**

The Trading Standards Scotland Bulletin looks at some of the most recent scams reported by consumers across Scotland. It is available by clicking on the hyperlink [here](#)

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## **Sextortion**

Following instances of Sextortion within the North East Police Division area, advice is included below on how to avoid becoming a victim.

Sextortion usually involves people being lured into taking off some or all of their clothes in front of their webcam, only to be told that they have been recorded and that the video will be posted online and/or shown to the victim's contacts unless a fee is paid. Sometimes, the victim is also enticed into performing intimate acts.

The consequences can range from embarrassment to humiliation and in extreme cases, have resulted in self-harm or even victims taking their own lives. Males and females of any age, anywhere, can become victims.

### **Remember:**

Never get lured into removing your clothes or performing intimate acts in front of your webcam. You do not know who may see the images.

Be wary about who you invite or accept invitations from on social networking sites. Do not accept friendship requests from complete strangers, irrespective of 'mutual friend' status.

Update the privacy settings on your social networking accounts so only people you know can view them.

Do not include any sensitive, private or confidential information in profiles.

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### **If you do become a victim:**

Do not pay and do not communicate further with the offenders.

Report the incident to the relevant social networking site.

Keep all evidence of the communications you have had, taking screenshots if you can. Do not delete any correspondence.

Report the incident to the police via 101.

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## **Sign Up for Neighbourhood Alert for free**

A great way in which Police can share information is via the Neighbourhood Alert system, which is delivered by Neighbourhood Watch Scotland. This enables us to send out e-mail messages relating to local crime trends and share crime prevention advice quickly and effectively to a wide audience. The information can also be targeted to particular groups, streets, or communities as required.

Anyone can sign-up to receive these e-mail messages, either individually or as a community group. The sign-up process allows you to specify the type of information you are interested in and from what source. This is coordinated by our partners in Neighbourhood Watch Scotland, who work with a range of partners in the public sector to provide information not only on crime, but also about community safety and resilience. We only send out messages which contribute to keeping you informed and safe.

In these uncertain times, Neighbourhood Alert is recognized as a trusted source of information. Please consider taking a moment to sign-up for Neighbourhood Alert e-mail messages, and encourage family, friends and neighbor's to do the same. Over 23,000 people across Scotland have joined so far, with more joining every day. You can join too, without setting up a Neighbourhood Watch.

Simply visit

[www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk](http://www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk)

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## **CyberScotland**

For up-to-date information on scams and cyber-related crimes and crime prevention tips, check out the following monthly bulletin [here](#)

**or sign up to receive updates [here](#)**

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**CRIMESTOPPERS** - <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/>

**Tel. 0800 555 111**

**SPEAK UP. STAY SAFE** - CRIMESTOPPERS are an independent charity that gives people the power to speak up to stop crime 100% anonymously.

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**ARE YOU READY FOR A LIFE CHANGING CAREER? -**  
<http://www.scotland.police.uk/recruitment/police-officers/>



As always please share the above information with your colleagues.

Regards

**Crime Reduction Unit  
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Facebook: [www.facebook.com/NorthEastPoliceDivision](https://www.facebook.com/NorthEastPoliceDivision)

*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.*

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