

North East Crime Alert

Police Scotland North East Crime Reduction Team

April 2022

Welcome to our April 2022 edition of newly named North East Crime Alert. Spring is upon us and now might be a good time to review security measures both at home and within your business.

As the cost of living increases we could potentially see an increase in certain crimes including the theft of fuel, building materials and frauds.

We will continue to share crime prevention advice but if you are looking for specific advice then contact us directly at

NorthEastCrimeReduction@scotland.pnn.police.uk

If you are a business looking for specific advice then consider having a look at the Scottish Business Resilience Centre. www.sbrcentre.co.uk.

SBRC is a not-for-profit and a respected voice in business resilience, bringing together the Scottish Government, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, and the Scottish business community. The vision of SBRC is to become the catalysts that makes Scotland one of the safest and most resilient places to live, work, and do business, both on and offline.

Regards

North East Crime Reduction Team



Theft of Quad Bikes

Officers are asking residents in rural areas to be vigilant following further quad bikes thefts from rural properties in Aberdeenshire. Sometime between Tuesday, 5 April and Wednesday, 6 April, 2022 a red 500cc quad bike was stolen from a farm near Mintlaw. The quad was recovered nearby.

Overnight between Wednesday, 6 April and Thursday, 7 April 2022 a green Yamaha 750cc quad bike and a red Yamaha 450cc quad bike were stolen from a farm near Fyvie. With the aid of tracking devices the quads were recovered in nearby woodland.

PC Mike Urquhart, Crime Reduction Officer, said: "In both of these incidents the quads were stolen overnight and appear to have been moved to nearby locations ready to be uplifted at a later time.

"These items cost a lot of money and are used in people's livelihoods, therefore it is vital we trace those responsible. "I would urge those in our rural communities to be vigilant, to always park quad bikes as close to your premises as possible, preferably out of sight from nearby roads.

"Always remove keys when not in use."Quads and ATVs should be secured inside buildings with good quality padlocks and chains. "Ground anchors or wheel clamps combined with an alarm are an excellent deterrent.

"Mark or customise your property so it is easily identifiable - this can deter thieves and also assist with recovery if stolen. "Also consider tracking devices for high value vehicles and machinery and keep a record of all vehicles with photographs and serial numbers."

Anyone with information can contact Police Scotland on 101 or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Vandalism at Castle Gardens, Ellon

Officers in Ellon are appealing for any information in relation to a Vandalism that occurred within the walled gardens at Castle Gardens, Ellon between 1400 hours and 1630 hours on Monday 4th April 2022.

Constable Ward of Ellon Police Station said, "Our enquiries regarding the Vandalism are in the early stages and currently on-going. A shed has been damaged and various items contained within were damaged or destroyed. The Castle Gardens is a well-maintained historic site which is enjoyed by the local community".

Anyone with information is asked to attend their local Police Station or call 101, quoting incident number PS-20220404-2180 or call the register charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 if they wish to remain anonymous.

Car Thefts, Aberdeen

Officers are asking residents in Aberdeen and across the North East to be vigilant following recent incidents of vehicles being entered and stolen or property stolen from within.

PC Richard Russell said: 'It sounds simple but always remember to lock your car. This is the simplest way to keep your car safe. Get into the habit of locking the car every time you leave it and ensuring your windows are closed. Never leave items on show as an invitation – any valuables should be removed from the vehicle or placed in the boot. Keys and ignition fobs should be kept safe and out of sight and reach – a common way to steal a car or van is to take the keys or ignition fob, either when left in the vehicle or from your home. Don't leave them in the lock of your front door, within reach of the letterbox or on the kitchen counter".

Vehicles fitted with a smart or passive key (a contactless key) can be susceptible to a type of theft called "Relay Theft". There are a wide range of electronic devices, key cloning devices and other tools that can be used by opportunist thieves and criminal gangs to target your vehicle.

There are a number of preventative measures you can take to prevent this type of theft:

- ➡ Store your keys in a security pouch. Security pouches are sometimes termed Faraday bags or RFID signal Fob Blocker/shields, these pouches will prevent the signal from your vehicle from being captured using electronic devices.
- ➡ Don't leave keys by the door grabbing the signal will be easier for the thieves if the keys are near the front door.
- CCTV this can be a deterrent and help protect both your car and home. If you do decide to use CCTV it is important to read the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) advice on Domestic CCTV systems

Theft at Maverston Gold Club, Urguhart

Officers in Lossiemouth are appealing for information following a theft of equipment at Maverston Golf Club, Urquhart.

The theft is thought to have taken place between 7am on Sunday 20 March and 6am on Monday 21 March 2022.

PC Miller of Lossiemouth Police Station said "Our enquiries into the theft are ongoing and I would urge anyone who saw any recent suspicious activity or has knowledge of the theft to get in touch.

Anyone with information is asked to call 101, quoting incident 0616 of 21 March 2022 or call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111, if you wish to remain anonymous

Theft of Plant Equipment, Aberdeen

Officers are appealing for information following the theft of a hydraulic crane arm which was removed and stolen from a trailer on the CALA Home Craibstone building site located off Inverurie Road in Aberdeen.

The theft is thought to have taken place between 5pm on Monday, 7 March and 8am on Thursday, 10 March.

The stolen equipment is estimated to be worth around £8000.

Detective Constable Eamonn Ryan of the CID Proactive Unit said:

"It would have taken several hours and specialist tools to dismantle the parts, as well as a large vehicle to transport the equipment, so someone is likely to have seen something.

"Our enquiries into this theft are ongoing and I would urge anyone with information or who believes they have seen any suspicious activity around the area to come forward.

"I would also ask that anyone in the area with a dashcam or private CCTV check their footage and pass on anything of note to the police.

"Anyone with any information is asked to call 101, quoting incident 0835 of 10 March, or call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111."



Businesses Against Scams has been set up by the National Trading Standards (NTS) Scams Team and includes a number of resources that companies can share with their employees which can educate them on a variety of common business related frauds, these are:

- · Government grant and tax rebate scams
- CEO fraud
- Invoice/mandate fraud
- Tech support scams

By completing a short questionnaire, you will be given access to a training session (PowerPoint) that takes around 10 minutes to complete and provides information on these frauds, what to look out for and how to prevent your company from falling victim to them. You will also get a number of Fact Sheets (PDF) that can be used as a refresher for staff members, along with a number of infographics/posters that can be used on social media or within your team.

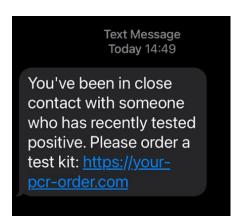
Please note that these resources are designed to be used with the employees, colleagues and volunteers within your business that have the authority to make financial decisions or have access to private company information. To sign up or to find out more about this free resource please visit www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/BAS

You and your entire organisation would benefit from taking the Friends Against Scams awareness session which covers scams in general and how to protect yourself and your loved ones from falling victim to them. This can be found at www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk

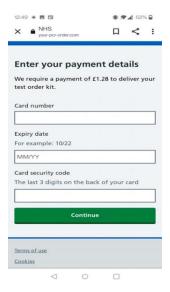
NHS FAKE TEXTS

We continue to see evidence of a fake text message purporting to be from the NHS has been circulating, demanding that you 'order a PCR testing kit'. Here's what it looks like.

Fake texts claiming that you've 'been in contact with someone who has recently tested positive' are continuing.



These texts take you through to convincing clones of the NHS site. Following the instructions will eventually lead to a page requesting your bank card details in order to pay a 'delivery fee'.



As explained below, the NHS would not contact you in this way or ask for your bank details. If you need to get a PCR test, visit the official <u>GOV.UK</u> site.

If you think you may have given sensitive information to fraudsters, let your bank know what's happened immediately.

Many of us have been 'pinged' by the NHS Covid-19 app at some point over the summer, so you might just be inclined to believe another communication stating that 'you have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19'.

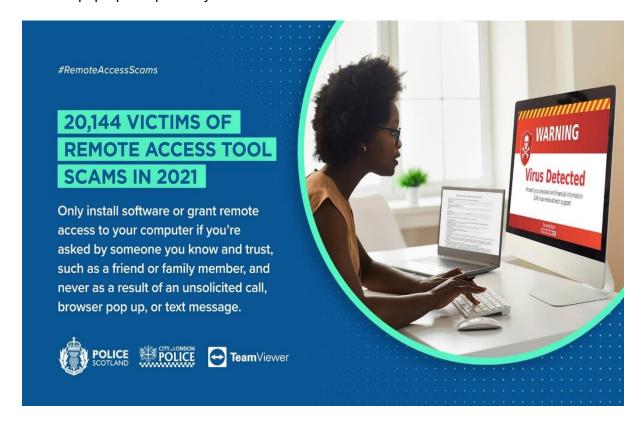
But what the app wouldn't tell you to do, of course, is order a PCR testing kit from a dubious website linked to in a text message out of the blue from an unrecognised number.

Remote Access Scams

In 2021, 20,144 people reported falling victim to scams that involved criminals remotely connecting to their computer.

In 2021, over £57M was lost to scams that involved criminals remotely connecting to a victim's computer.

√Never allow remote access to your computer following an unsolicited call, text message or browser pop-up. It's probably a scam.





Scottish Business Resilience Centre Exercises' Session via MS Teams – 26th April

Exercise in a Box is an online tool from the NCSC which helps organisations test and practise their response to a cyber attack.

It is completely free, and you don't have to be an expert to use it. The service provides exercises, based around the main cyber threats, which your organisation can do in your own time, in a safe environment, as many times as you want. It includes everything you need for setting up, planning, delivery, and post-exercise activity, all in one place.

The micro exercise session combines several fundamental aspects of cyber security with additional, broader cyber security learnings within a 90-minute session to ensure all organisations, regardless of their sector or level of cyber knowledge, can benefit and enjoy. The exercise is split up into 4 topics:

- 1. Ensuring password security
- 2. Identifying and reporting phishing emails
- 3. Connecting securely during remote work
- 4. Responding to a ransomware attack

To register visit www.sbrcentre.co.uk/events/exercise-in-a-box-micro-exercises-26th-april

Booking a holiday?

Looking for a bargain holiday?

Make sure you do your research and read online reviews from reputable sources to check websites are genuine.

It is safest to only use the secure payment method recommended by reputable online retailers.

Criminals can expertly design websites that seem professional and convincing, using images of luxury villas and apartments that don't exist to convince you they're trusted and genuine.

Beware of any deals that seem "too good to be true".



Tax Refund

Beware of scam emails or messages that suggest you are owed a tax refund.

Criminals use 'hooks' to grab your attention, by claiming you owe tax or are due a refund.

Remember the #StopChallengeProtect advice:

STOP: Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.

CHALLENGE: Could it be fake? It's ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.

PROTECT: Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud.

If you have any suspicions, forward emails to phishing@hmrc.gov.uk and texts to 60599.



Payment Diversion Fraud

Payment Diversion Fraud (PDF), also known as Business Email Compromise (BEC), tends to affect businesses and customers where electronic financial transactions are taking place.

What is Payment Diversion Fraud?

Payment Diversion Fraud (PDF), also known as Business Email Compromise (BEC) or Mandate Fraud, affects businesses and customers where electronic financial transactions are taking place.

Criminals will contact businesses or customers via email, usually claiming to be from a company that the business or customer has been dealing with. They will request a payment to be made often or inform the recipient of a change of bank account details.

Criminals will often create fake e-mail addresses which are very similar to genuine business or customer addressees and send over fake invoices to make it more believable. All of this leads to payments from businesses and customers directly into bank accounts controlled by the criminals.

Criminals are experts at impersonating people and will spend hours researching you for their scams.

Stop, think and follow the Take Five to Stop Fraud advice as it could protect you and your money.

Take Five to Stop Fraud advice



Advice for individuals

Criminals are experts at impersonating people, organisations and the police. They spend hours researching you for their scams, hoping you'll let your guard down for just a moment. Stop and think. It could protect you and your money.

STOP: Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.

CHALLENGE: Could it be fake? It's ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests for your financial or personal details. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.

PROTECT: Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam, don't feel ashamed or embarrassed - you are not alone.

Advice for businesses

Criminals are experts at impersonating people, businesses and the police. They spend hours researching your business for their scams, hoping you will let your guard down for just a moment.

STOP: If you receive a request to make an urgent payment, change supplier bank details or provide financial information, take a moment to stop and think.

CHALLENGE: Could it be fake? Verify all payments and supplier details directly with the company on a known phone number or in person first.

PROTECT: Contact your business' bank immediately if you think you've been scammed and report it to Action Fraud.

Advice can be found on the Take Five website addresses here: www.takefive-stopfraud.org.uk

Improve your cyber security with NCSC Cyber Aware

Use the 6 NCSC Cyber Aware actions to keep yourself safe.

Use a strong and separate password for your email. Create strong passwords using 3 random words. Save your passwords in your browser. Turn on two-factor authentication (2FA). Update your devices. Back up your data.

Launch of Construction Watch Scotland



An ALERT platform aimed at tackling a rise in thefts from construction sites and fuel thefts starts today.

On Wednesday 23 March, the protocol, known as Construction Watch Scotland, was launched at an event held within the GAP Hire Solutions Depot, Harthill Industrial Estate.

The new ALERT platform seeks to enhance awareness between construction and trade industries, as well as police, to ensure intelligence relating to criminal or suspicious activity at one location is quickly provided to others along with prevention advice.

Construction Watch Scotland has been devised in partnership by Police Scotland and Neighbourhood Watch Scotland. It follows a rise in the thefts of plant equipment, tools and stored fuel and is supported by and supported by the Scottish Business Resilience Centre, Secured by Design and Crimestoppers.

In February 2022 alone, almost half a million pounds worth of equipment has been stolen across the country. The most targeted areas being the North East of Scotland and The Lothians and Scottish Borders.

Last month, over £11,000 worth of stored fuel has been stolen. The fuel thefts affect a wide range of people from individual's families heating oil tanks to small businesses and those managing land and estates across Scotland.

Similar ALERT schemes are already in place to tackle other forms of acquisitive crime as part of Rural Watch Scotland and Neighbourhood Watch Scotland.

Inspector Alan Dron from the National Rural & Acquisitive Crime Unit said: "We know that plant equipment, tools and fuel stores are often an attractive target for criminals, as they are of high value when selling on. Often site or vehicle security is breached during hours of darkness when there are very few potential witnesses, making it easier to make off with these items.

"The Construction Watch Scotland scheme allows those who are signed up to quickly be advised of offences or suspicious activity in their area, while recommending specific prevention measures that could be taken.

"Not only do we hope this will enhance our intelligence picture when investigating these incidents, but we are also looking to reduce the number of crimes occurring, with our ability to share information and make construction sites as uninviting as possible to serve as a deterrent.

"We've already seen the successful application of the ALERT platform through Rural Watch Scotland and Neighbourhood Watch Scotland and I'm confident Construction Watch Scotland will be of similar value in addressing construction and trade acquisitive crime."

A spokesperson for Campion Homes added: "We have very recently had some very bad experience on our sites, in particular, one in Dundee. Over the course of a few nights youths entered our site and caused considerable damage to both our teleporter and static mobile crane, they also vandalised numerous components breaking many panes of class in the process.

"The machinery was out of use for a number of days which resulted in down time for both our company and local tradesmen. We almost lost the tradesmen because their morale was at rock bottom and thankfully we convinced them to stay and proceed with works on site.

"Construction Watch Scotland aims to prevent these incidents occurring, but if they do, then to ensure other sites aren't similarly targeted and hopefully making sure those responsible are caught by the police."

A CCG Contracts Division spokesperson, said: "Recently we had two youths enter a large project, having got past the security cameras and entering a flatted block under construction.

"They set fire to some waste material, which in turn, ended with the block being totally fire damaged resulting in an insurance cost of approximately £1Million.

"CCTV footage shows that they were in and out in just about five minutes. Thankfully, they have been convicted.

"It only takes a minute for these crimes to occur and the impact on companies like ourselves can be devastating. That's why we openly welcome the introduction of the new ALERT platform, Construction Watch Scotland."

Labour Exploitation



Labour exploitation is a form of modern slavery and it's happening today all over Scotland.

The motivation for offenders is financial gain, regardless of the human cost to victims.

Any business can be affected, although those with high ongoing or seasonal labour needs will always be at higher risk. It's the responsibility of owners, managers and employees to make sure their business does not become involved in the exploitation of people, either intentionally or through poor practice.

Our brand new End Labour Exploitation microsite https://endlabourexploitation.co.uk

explains everything you need to know about labour exploitation, including the ways people are exploited, recognising the signs, how to ensure your business is not part of the problem and ways to get help if you are a victim.

Police Scotland saw a 135% increase in labour exploitation case referrals in 2019.

We can all help to #EndLabourExploitation by staying alert and knowing what to look out for.

Labour exploitation is criminal. Report it, like you would any other crime.

Help us to 'break the chain' of labour exploitation by staying vigilant and reporting your suspicions by calling 101 (or 999 in an emergency).

You can also call the Modern Slavery Helpline on 0800 0121 700.

Hate Crime

Hate happens every day. But we don't need to accept it.

We encourage everyone to report incidents of hate that they experience or witness.

If you have been targeted because of your disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity, we want you to report it. If you are aware of someone else being targeted, we also want you to report it.

What is hate crime?

Being targeted for your disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity could be considered a hate crime. You can also be targeted for more than one characteristic or perceived characteristic.

Hate crimes can include but are not limited to:

- assault
- verbal abuse
- damage to property
- threatening behaviour
- robbery
- harassment
- online abuse.

Police Scotland and hate crime

Police Scotland takes hate crime very seriously. We will take appropriate action and do everything we can to bring those responsible to justice.

Everyone in Scotland has rights that protect them from hate crime. Whether you live in Scotland, are here to work, or are visiting Scotland, you are protected by law from hate crime. This includes if you are currently seeking asylum or refugee status.

If English is not your first language, we will seek the assistance of an interpreter/BSL interpreter for you. This is to help you give us your report in your first language.

We want you to feel safe and comfortable when speaking to us. Where possible we will arrange to speak with you at a place you feel comfortable. You can also have a support person present.

Reporting a hate crime

We will listen to you, provide support and take appropriate action. Here is a summary of what will happen when you report a hate crime:

- 1. We will listen to you, your report will be investigated and we will offer you victim support
- 2. You will be contacted by an officer either by phone, in person or by your preferred method of contact
- 3. Police Scotland will take appropriate action and you will be kept informed
- 4. If Police Scotland has enough evidence, the person responsible will be charged with the offence and reported to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service
- 5. If there is not enough evidence we will still record your report as a hate incident and offer you support*
- 6. Once your case is with the Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal service you will be kept updated on the progress of your case.

*It is important to still report non-criminal hate incidents. This helps us get a clearer picture of what is happening in Scotland and where to focus our attention.

You can contact us and report hate crime in the following ways:

- By phoning 999 (emergency) 101 (non-emergency)
- In person at any police station
- By completing a hate crime reporting form
- At a <u>Third Party Reporting Centre</u>
- Text 999 (registered users only)
- Contact Scotland-BSL
- Keep Safe Scotland App

Getting support when reporting hate crime

In some cases victims and witnesses of hate crime do not feel comfortable reporting the matter directly to the police. They may feel more comfortable reporting it to someone they are familiar with or they may want support when they report.

To ensure everyone is able to report hate crime, Police Scotland works closely with a wide variety of partners who perform the role of <u>Third Party Reporting Centres</u>.

These partners have been trained to assist people in submitting a report to the police and can make reports on your behalf

The Herbert Protocol



The Herbert Protocol is a well-established initiative already used elsewhere in Scotland and the wider UK. It originated in Norfolk and takes its name after Normandy landings veteran George Herbert, who lived with dementia and died in 2011, after he went missing while looking for his childhood home.

It requires a detailed form to be populated with vital information such as a recent photograph, contact details, routines and significant locations, which can then be provided to officers and used to save vital time in a missing person inquiry.

The scheme is available to everyone registered with adult care services including people living with dementia or similar conditions.

Families can also fill out the forms for vulnerable relatives living at home who are at risk of going missing.

For relatives in a care home, staff there should be contacted initially by a family member to discuss filling in the Herbert Protocol form and it can then be included in an individual's care plan.

For relatives at home, the paperwork can be obtained through any police station or can be downloaded from the Police Scotland website and should be stored within the home.

Further information including a copy of the form can be found here: www.scotland.police.uk/what-s-happening/missing-persons/the-herbert-protocol/

Trading Standards Scotland Bulletin

Business advice and Scam Bulletins from Trading Standards Scotland can be found at https://www.tsscot.co.uk

Aberdeenshire Trading Standard Bulletins can be found on the following link http://publications.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/dataset/trading-standards-crime-and-scams-bulletin

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. Simply visit

www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk

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.

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.

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

URGENT MESSAGES WILL BE SENT OUT AS APPROPRIATE

Crime Reduction UnitNorth East Division

Email: NorthEastCrimeReduction@scotland.pnn.police.uk

Website: www.scotland.police.uk
Twitter: www.twitter.com/NorthEPolice

Facebook: 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