

DATE: September 2020

Hello! And welcome to Issue 5. In this issue we look at the new Fuel Action campaign and interview a member of the Business Crime Unit

! Essex Police officers are deployed in this area to tackle fuel theft



Theft Act 1978

A person who, knowing that payment on the spot for any goods supplied or service done is required or expected from him, dishonestly makes off without having paid as required or expected and with intent to avoid payment of the amount due shall be guilty of an offence.

Fuel Action

Fuel forecourts across Essex find themselves victim to offenders filling their vehicles with fuel and then driving away without making an attempt to pay. A high percentage of these offenders are involved in other offences and it is vital we work with businesses to prevent offences and bring offenders to justice.

Through crime analysis and reported offences, we have identified the most vulnerable locations and we are working closely with these forecourts to try to prevent offences by deploying a number of different tactics ranging from posters, banners and informative pump stickers, to additional patrols and the introduction of reporting and guidance packs.

The guidance packs are designed to inform victims of policing and prosecution procedures so victims have an understanding of how investigations are progressed and what elements are required for a successful prosecution. It will also aid transparency in the service.

The campaign launched on 8th September and we are visiting the identified forecourts to work closely with them, give crime prevention advice and reassurance.



Business Crime Unit: So what do you do? - How can businesses prevent crime? An Interview with PC Michael Lee

Q. Tell us about the Business Crime Unit and what you do?

The purpose of the Business Crime Unit is to prevent crime against business, improve crime prevention and strengthen partnership working through a number of objectives:

- Establish and develop a network of businesses and business groups to act as a conduit for Essex Police to communicate and engage with the business community
- Identify and share best practice on crime prevention with businesses
- Support Local and Community Policing teams to deliver effective Business crime policing
- Reduce Making off without payments across Essex in respect of fuel
- Reduce violence towards business employees

It's important for us to establish excellent working relationships with the business communities and to spend time explaining police and prosecution practices, listen to issues that affect businesses and encourage victims of crime to come forward and record details so we have a better knowledge of their concerns.

Since our creation in February we have implemented a number of initiatives to tackle repeat offending, shop lifting, fuel theft and making off without payment. We are implementing and supporting Business Crime Reduction Partnerships in town centres identified as suffering from long term crime. We are identifying and working with private companies who could benefit from having police community accreditation powers and standardising police practices with regards to investigations. We are looking at ways to make reporting easier and to improve working relationships in order to keep staff and the public safe.

Q. Who else is in the Business Crime Unit?

The team is made up of 4 people, one Sergeant, two PCs and an experienced analyst to supply us with data so we know where our time will be best spent and which areas we need to focus on. Between the police officers we have over 50 years of policing experience, dealing with long term community issues, problem solving and partnership working.

Q. How can the business crime Unit help businesses; specifically our members?

It is our goal to ensure that businesses in Essex know who to contact if they require crime prevention advice or support on policing, procedure and investigations. We make sure best practice is achieved regarding investigations into offences against businesses, that we look at repeat offences and offenders and how to support victims. We are also looking at long term problems and working with our new partners to prevent crime.

Q. What would you like from businesses?

Reporting and intelligence. We are aware that some business communities might have lost faith in the police service, but we must stress the importance of reporting incidents when they occur so we have a chance to investigate. Police are evidence gatherers and we put the best case forward to the crown prosecution service and courts for them to be able to make a conviction. Without information from the community, we will not know about areas of concern and then won't be able to act. Through Katie, our analyst, we inform the local policing teams of where the crime hotspots are and who is causing the most offending

We have been working on guidance documents for businesses that explain policing processes with the aim of making it easier for businesses to report crime and providing clearly expectations of what the police are able to do when investigating their incident

Q. What simple and effective crime prevention measures can businesses take?

The world has changed even in the time I have been a police officer. Today we are dealing with offences online including theft and fraud as well as being in a virtual world where harassment and abuse are made easier by the use of social media. Businesses need to be aware not just of the physical world but also of their online security. Simple advice, adopt the same sense of security online as you would in reality. Do you know the people you are talking to? Are your accounts secure? Consider using different passwords for different accounts and change them regularly. Never share passwords or accounts with anyone. Try not to publish photographs of the inside of your business premises or office online.

Treat your business premises as you would your home, stay safe, secure and protected. Regarding property, ensure you know who has keys to your workplace, who is responsible for security. Set rules for entry and exit. Install motion detection lighting and an alarm system. Remove any article outside the premises that could be used to commit an offence; such as a ladder, tools or loose masonry. Make the building appear to be difficult to get into; sometimes simply cleaning the building, windows and doors will give it the appearance of new secure openings, if you can not afford to replace them. Reduce the pay-off; remove any valuable articles from public view; computers and small electrical items.

Q. With crime types evolving, what areas do you think businesses need to focus on in the future?

Cybercrime and online fraud is a huge issue for us and businesses. Ensure you know who you are dealing with online and that your details are secure.

Mandate fraud is becoming a huge issue, whereby fraudsters set up direct debits with companies without their knowledge, often helping themselves to small amounts of money frequently so to avoid detection. Fraudsters will also impersonate your regular clients and it can be difficult to differentiate. We know the difficult financial constraints businesses face but there are some free and low cost solutions to prevent your business being victim of fraud <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/business-protection> is a good place to start

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking is occurring in Essex today. We ask all businesses to ensure they know their staff personally, where they come from, their personal status and support network. Having personal relationships might also build their confidence to confide in you. Make sure wages are paid directly into the personal accounts of the employee. Ensuring employees know that if they have any personal issues they can approach a supervisor for support.

Also ensure your supply chain is ethical. Many businesses are required to produce a statement on how they safeguard against Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking and you should have sight of this when using the services of other companies or contractors.

As well as crime that affects a business, employers should also be aware of crime affecting their employees. Domestic Abuse, against both men and woman is a daily occurrence in Essex. Having a procedure in place and well-advertised to your staff, showing that you will support them should they report anything to you.

We are really keen to hear from Businesses across Essex about what we can do to better support your business and prevent you being a victim of crime.

business.crime.unit@essex.police.uk

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Criminal Behaviour Orders

Over the last month we have been working closely with a community policing team to secure a Criminal Behaviour Order against a prolific repeat offender in the Tendring district.

The offender had been committing shoplifting offences for many years with a string of convictions on his record. He appeared before Colchester Magistrates court and in our presence was given an order which he must adhere to for 3 years.

The idea around Criminal Behaviour Orders isn't just to restrict the movements of an offender but more importantly it is also to protect victims of crime. Any breach of a condition on the order is an arrestable offence for which we can take action.

Each month we will bring you the latest on work we are conducting throughout the county, our projects and innovative ways of tackling offences and on-going concerns that effect business.



Sgt Terry Jacobs

Terry has had a career on frontline local policing teams and in his most recent role managed service recovery and complaints



PC Alex Plakhtienko

Alex has extensive partnership experience working in Community Policing Teams within South Essex



PC Michael Lee

Michael has worked within partnership policing for several years and leads the force CSAS training accreditation.



PSE Katie Roberts

Katie is an experienced analyst and joins the Business Crime Unit from her previous role in force performance analysis

If we can offer any advice or reassurance, please contact us at

business.crime.unit@essex.police.uk

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