



BUSINESS CRIME UNIT BUSINESS NEWSLETTER

02
ISSUE

DATE: July 2020

Hello! And welcome to Issue 2.

This month we will be looking at the effects of COVID19 on Business Crime and how we are supporting Businesses in Essex.

Supporting Business Recovery and the effects of the crisis on Business Crime:

The Team have been supporting Essex Businesses with their re-opening plans, giving guidance on restrictions and encouraging shops and businesses to open with minimal health risks to employees and the public.

Finding the balance between protecting people and protecting the business is not easy but getting reopen is a priority and we are finding at this early stage that some of the measures the government have introduced are actually helping to reduce crime. Shoplifting, for example, in some outlets has reduced significantly due to a staff member on the entrance controlling the flow of the public entering the premises. And some criminals are turning away by the queues of people waiting outside.

If we can offer advice on following restrictions and guidance, please do contact us at

business.crime.unit@essex.police.uk

Emerging national crime trends due to COVID19:

Pharmacies had started being broken into and theft of prescription pain killers as the government restrictions have had an impact on the supply and distribution of prohibited drugs. With less traffic on our roads, there are fewer places to hide and 'County Lines' dealers were being more cautious. In an attempt to reduce offences more opioids will be stored at secure locations so it becomes less attractive to the opportunist.

Warehouses were being targeted for high value electrical goods as some buildings remain unstaffed. Large holes were being drilled into the sides of buildings and entry gained. As non-essential stores start to reopen, these offenses may subside but it is also possible that the offender has found a new way to obtain high value goods when buildings are closed to the public.

Empty Pubs and bars being targeted for alcohol and cigarettes and cash from machines. We will expect this to subside once these premises open from 4th July.

We saw an increase in theft from supermarkets and service stations as other premises were closed. This trend may remain as other businesses reopen.

Construction sites being targeted for tools and machinery as sites are left vacant.

As more people are working from home or continue to be furloughed, theft from HGV increase as the vehicles become more recognisable as motorways are clearer of traffic. HGVs are also being targeted at fuel forecourts and are having side curtains slashed. Drivers sometimes being attacked.

Offenders following home delivery vehicles of companies who are now leaving goods on doorsteps to achieve social distancing. Offenders are lifting goods from doorsteps.

NHS PPE stolen, uniforms and ID cards taken so offenders can gain entry to hospitals and storage sites. Uniform and ID also being used for drug distribution by county lines. The belief that dealers will be less likely to be stopped if in uniform.

A survey by the Federation of Small Businesses suggests that over a third (37%) of small businesses have been forced to close since the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak in the UK. In response to the strain being placed on them, more than one in three (37%) of East Anglia's small employers are considering, or have already made, redundancies. Nearly three quarters (74%) of small employers have furloughed staff to aid the survival of their business.

The Essex Police Business Crime Unit look at the emerging crime trends and implement ways to deal with these complex issues, working in partnership with businesses, local authorities and our colleagues in other constabularies to find best practice and support.

Please stay safe. Don't take any risks with your health or the health of others and follow government guidelines to fight this pandemic.

Essex Police Business Crime Unit

Email: business.crime.unit@essex.police.uk



Business Crime Reduction Partnerships (BCRP)

Over the past month we have been working with identified areas affected by crime to implement Business Crime Reduction Partnerships.

The partnership ensures that we can concentrate on specific offences being conducted in that area and implement plans to reduce the offending. They are also a way of sharing intelligence through a web based information sharing system that the police and local authorities can contribute to. Local business members can also place information on the system and it can be accessed by anybody wanting to be part of the partnership.

Police briefings can be placed on the system giving members crime prevention advice and knowledge of crime trends and incidents of note police are dealing with.

It will be deemed appropriate to provide some areas with direct radio access to policing teams to allow our Town Team officers to respond to incidents or give advice directly to concerned members.

We are also looking at supporting CSAS accreditation (Community Safety Accreditation Scheme) to private or publicly owned businesses with a public facing patrol element to their duties. This will give low level policing powers to members to deal directly with some offences of anti-social behaviour and complex social issues that affect business.

There are currently 54 Accredited organisations in Essex with over 500 Accredited employees assisting the public by preventing crime, issuing fixed penalty notices and patrolling our public areas. Being CSAS Accredited will also see members work with police on long term community issues.

With BCRP schemes already up and running successfully in Southend and Colchester, two of our biggest populated areas, we are now working hard to establish working partnerships in Harlow, Thurrock, Braintree and the Tendring district.

Criminal Behaviour Orders

Repeat offending is a huge issue for all businesses but especially the retail sector.

To help alleviate reoffending and aid rehabilitation, on conviction, criminal behaviour orders can be applied for and placed on repeat offenders to prohibit their movements and actions. The orders contain 'conditions' that the offender must meet. If the conditions are breached it becomes an arrestable offence.

CBOs are also a way of helping people who offend to pay for addiction, by involving supportive and constructive rehabilitation methods implemented with partner agencies who have specialist knowledge of drug and alcohol dependency.

The Business Crime Unit analyse the offenders having the most impact on businesses in Essex and now tackle these offenders earlier in their offending cycle. We are also working closely with our Community Policing Teams to ensure other officers are using best practice and applying for orders on their most prolific offenders wherever possible.

Follow us on Twitter! - @EsBusinessCrime



What have the Business Crime Unit been doing to support business?

Keyholder Database

COVID19 Business Crime Prevention Guides

Responding to emerging crime trends

Progressing Business against Crime groups across Essex and implementing information sharing system

Take positive action against offenders and look for innovative ways to stop offending

Gift Card Fraud

The Business Crime Unit are working collaboratively with our colleagues from The Fraud Team in a joint project to protect vulnerable people from being targeted by offenders and the Gift Card Scam.

Victims are located by offenders who have access to a 'suckers' list of people who have already been victims of scams. People who are likely to pick up the phone and engage with scammers and who are likely to confide in a stranger online or over the phone. Offenders will contact them and pretend to be a government agency, for example HMRC and explain that they owe TAX from years ago. The scammers then say that the only way to pay the fee is by using Gift Cards. So the victim purchases cards from major stores and is then requested to send the card numbers to the scammers.

Offenders are also threatening victims to disclose personal details to family members if their requests are not met.

We are working closely with Major Supermarket chains by putting prevent measures in place. Adding prompts on electronic tills so cashiers will ask security and welfare questions to customers and there will be a new procedure in place for reporting to police.

Please be vigilant when entering into any conversation with someone you don't know

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.

We will also give you details of crime trends to be aware of.



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

