







Welcome to the December 2024 edition of North East Crime Alert.

Produced by the Police Scotland North East Division Crime Reduction Team it's aim is to provide advice on how to spot the latest frauds and scams as well as how to keep your home and business safe.

In this edition of North East Crime Alert:

North East Division Roads Policing officers give advice on how to plan a journey and stay safe this winter.

With Christmas preparations well under we look at how to stay safe while shopping online.

Vebsite www.scotland.police.uk

www.twitter.com/

Twitter NorthFPolice

Facebook www.facebook.com/ NorthEastPoliceDivision Do you have what it takes to complete Probationer Training? Find out on page 7.

Officers across the North East are visiting our local communities with advice about how to keep your home safe After Dark. Read our latest guidance.

Getting a bike for Christmas? Find out how to keep your bike secure and get it registered online for free.

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

Criminals are using ever more sophisticated methods. By staying better informed and working in partnership we can ensure our communities continue to be a safe place to live and work







As winter approaches, the scenic roads of Scotland transform into picturesque yet potentially hazardous routes. The beauty of snow-covered landscapes can quickly turn treacherous, making winter driving a challenge even for the most experienced motorists. Here's a comprehensive guide on how to prepare and drive safely during the Scottish winter.

Prepare Your Vehicle

Ensure your tyres have adequate tread depth and are properly inflated. Consider using winter tyres for better grip on icy roads.

Cold weather can affect your car battery. Check its condition and replace it if necessary.

Top up your antifreeze, windscreen washer fluid, and oil. Use a winter-grade washer fluid to prevent freezing.

Ensure all lights are functioning correctly. Clean your headlights, brake lights, and indicators to improve visibility.

Replace worn wiper blades and ensure they are in good working condition.

Make sure your windows are clean and aren't misted up. Ensure there is no snow and ice on your windows before you drive.

Driving Safely in Winter Conditions

Reduce your speed to account for reduced traction on snow or ice. Remember, stopping distances can be ten times longer in icy conditions.

Maintain a greater distance between your vehicle and the one in front to give yourself more time to react.

Avoid sudden movements. Accelerate, brake, and steer smoothly to prevent skidding.

In snowy or icy conditions, use higher gears to maintain better control of your vehicle.

Use your headlights in poor visibility conditions, even during the day. Ensure your vehicle is visible to others.

Do not use cruise control on slippery roads as it can reduce your control over the vehicle.

Never overtake snowploughs or gritting lorries. The drivers have limited visibility, and you are likely to find that the road in front of them is worse than the road behind.

Do not assume your vehicle can handle all conditions. Even four-wheel drive vehicles can encounter trouble on winter roads.

Essential Winter Driving Kit

Blankets and Warm Clothing
Non-perishable snacks and bottled water
First Aid Kit
Torch and Batteries
Ice Scraper and De-icer
Shovel
Jump Leads
Mobile Phone Charger
A warning triangle and high-visibility vest.

Understanding Weather Conditions

Regularly check weather forecasts and road conditions before setting off. Websites, apps, and local news can provide up-to-date information.

Avoid Unnecessary Travel. If severe weather is forecast, consider postponing your journey. If travel is essential, plan your route to avoid areas prone to severe conditions.

For real time journey information visit www.trafficscotland.org follow @trafficscotland on Twitter (X) or call 0800 028 14 14.

Stay safe and drive carefully this winter.

Here are our basic guidelines about how to stay safe online; use them and you can shop with confidence.



Shopping online for Christmas is easy, avoids the queues, there's bargains galore and shipping is fast. Even the returns are easy. Here are our basic guidelines about how to stay safe online; use them and you can shop with confidence.

Start at a trusted site

Search results can be rigged to lead you astray, especially when you drift past the first few pages of links. If you know the site, chances are it's less likely to be a rip-off. We all know Amazon.com carries everything under the sun; likewise, just about every major retail outlet has an online shop. Beware of misspellings or sites using a different top-level domain (.net instead of .com, for example) - those are the oldest tricks in the book. Yes, sales on these sites might look enticing, but that's how they trick you into giving up your info.

Look for the lock

Never buy anything online using your credit card from a site that doesn't have SSL (secure sockets layer) encryption installed - at the very least. You'll know if the site has SSL because the URL for the site will start with HTTPS - instead of just HTTP. An icon of a locked padlock will appear, typically to the left of the URL in the address bar or the status bar down below; it depends on your browser. HTTPS is standard now even on non-shopping sites, enough that Google Chrome flags any page without the extra S as 'not secure.' So a site without it should stand out even more.

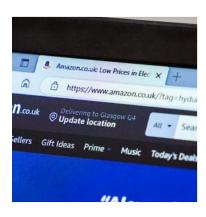
Don't Overshare

No online shop needs your Social Security number or your birthday to do business. However, if crooks get them and your credit card number, they can do a lot of damage. The more scammers know, the easier it is to steal your identity. When possible, default to giving up as little personal data as possible. Major sites get breached all the time.

Check your statements regularly

Don't wait for your bill to come at the end of the month. Go online regularly during the holiday season and look at electronic statements for your credit card, debit card, and checking accounts. Look for any fraudulent charges, even originating from payment sites like PayPal and Venmo. (After all, there's more than one way to get to your money.)

You should definitely only buy online with a credit card. If your debit card is compromised, scammers have direct access to your bank funds. Any seller that wants a different kind of payment, like wired money, is a big red flag.



HTTPS is standard now even on non-shopping sites. Google Chrome flags any page without the extra S as 'not secure.'

Password Management

The most important thing when it comes to setting a strong password is uniqueness. In order to guarantee a truly unique password, a passphrase is the recommended option.

A passphrase is a combination of **three random words** creating a password that is both long enough and strong enough to protect your account.

What makes a good password

Keep your passwords unique, don't repeat them across multiple accounts.

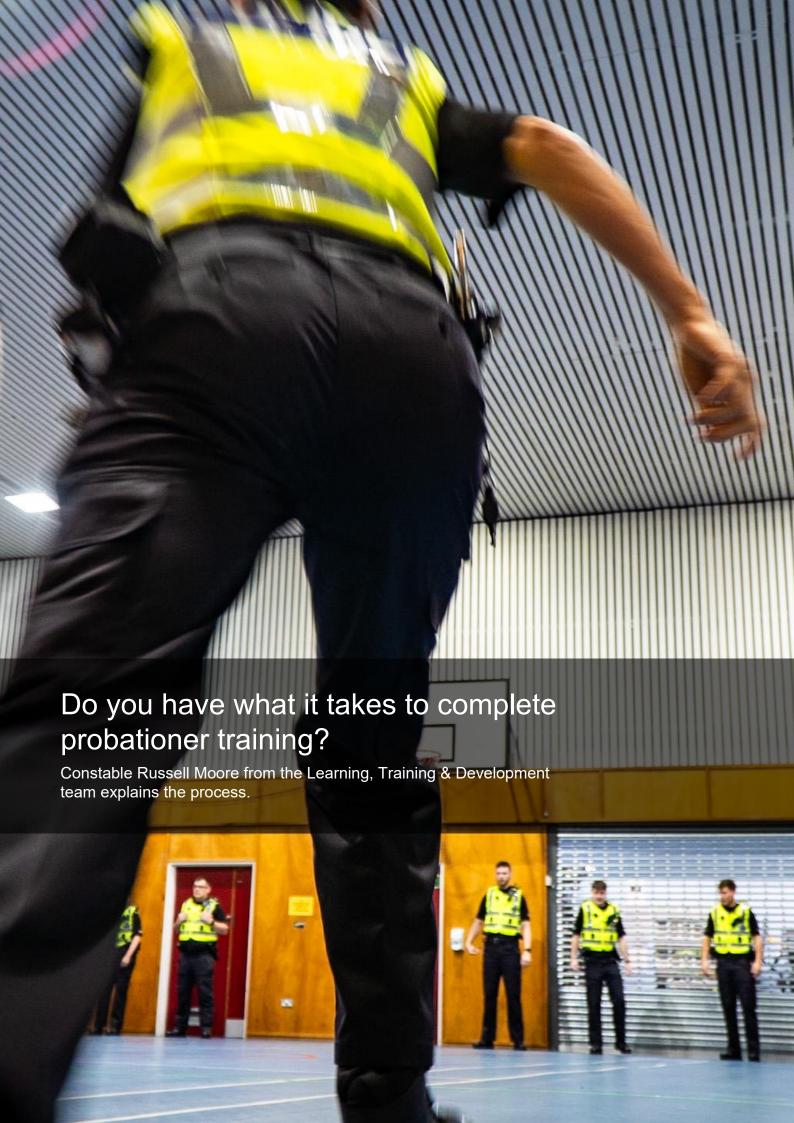
Never write your passwords down or share them with anyone.

Ensure Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) is enabled where possible.

Good Passwords Examples are:

- blend18^solid+Craft
- novel33#Grace^shadow
- swift42@ECHO&mingle
- gLint21!focus@Bright



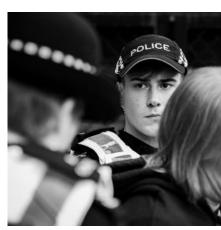














The 'Learning Training and Development' department has responsibility for training new probationers throughout the duration of their two year probationary period.

There are six training venues based around Scotland (Scottish Police College, Jackton, Fettes, Balunifield, Aberdeen and Inverness).

Each venue has specially trained officers and staff dedicated to probationers. The training received ensures these officers deploy to their stations with the necessary skill sets to provide a high standard of service to the public.

Once officers have progressed through the recruitment process they begin their career with a week at their local training venue where they are issued with uniform and take the 'Oath Of Constable' in front of a Justice of the Peace and an officer from the Command Team.

Training at the Scottish Police College lasts for 13 weeks. This comprises of learning Scottish Legislation, Officer Safety Training, scenario based training culminating in exams and a 'Pass Out' parade.

Probationary Officers then return to the local training venues for two weeks where they are provided further

training on local issues and IT training on Police systems. Enhanced practical scenarios, concentrating on making them as realistic as possible, are carried out. Other training includes directing traffic, speed detection, court visits, intoximeter (breath testing) and further classroom inputs.

Probationary Constables then deploy to their stations where they will work alongside an experienced Tutor Constable who will guide them through their learning process.

Throughout their probationary period officers return to their local training venues to sit exams to ensure they have a high level of knowledge of legislation and how it is put into practice. Alongside the exams probationers will complete an Electronic Portfolio of Evidence which is a record of the officers achievements in dealing with a variety of incidents.

At the end of the two year probationary period officers will 'Confirm' in the rank of Police Constable and receive a 'Certificate in Policing' if they have achieved in their exams and completed all the required paperwork.

For further information regarding recruitment visit www.scotland.police.uk











The North East Crime Reduction Team took to the streets of Grampian armed with crow bars and camera to illustrate Police Scotland's' 'After Dark' campaign.

Lock the Door

Obvious isn't it? But some people don't do it. Lock the door even if you're only out for a short time. If you have window locks, lock those too. Keep the door locked when you are at home. This stops criminals coming in if you are in another part of the house or garden.

Don't leave your keys on the inside of locks or just inside the door. If you have a spare key, don't leave it under a mat, plant-pot or other easy to spot place at home. Never keep house keys and car keys on the same ring.

Safes and Security Boxes

Don't keep large amounts of gold, jewellery and cash at home. Bedrooms and lofts are routinely searched during housebreakings, particularly if the occupants are celebrating a cultural festival.

Consider storing valuable items at your bank. Private companies offer similar services. If this option is unavailable consider an insurance rated safe. Safes should be securely attached to the solid fabric of the building not just to a plasterboard wall or left sitting on the floor. Ideally get an insurance approved installer to fit a safe in your home.

Lighting and CCTV

House alarms and CCTV are a great visual deterrent. Modern Wi-Fi enabled CCTV systems can be combined with bright LED lighting. Any movement detected outside your home can trigger an alert to a number of mobile devices.

If considering CCTV look to cover every aspect of your home. Small discreet cameras can also be used inside. Use signage to advise that CCTV is in use.

When you're away use timers to turn on lights, radios, or TVs to put off unwanted visitors. Smart plugs allow times to be changed even whilst away.

Vehicles

High value cars are particularly vulnerable to theft and criminals will commit a housebreaking to obtain the true key of the vehicle. Where possible park vehicles inside a garage. Secure the keys inside your property out of sight. Avoid leaving them in obvious locations such as the hallway table or kitchen. Never leave valuables in your car.

Keyless Theft or Relay Theft involves criminals using hand held technology to identify whether a parked car has keyless entry. If the car 'key' is close enough the criminals can amplify the signal and send it to a transmitter which acts as the true key and opens the car allowing it to be driven off. Keep keys and fobs well away from doors and windows and purchase a signal blocker wallet to keep them in.

Property Marking and Insurance

There are a number of products you can buy which contain a unique code like DNA. This code is registered to your address. They are usually clear liquids which can be applied onto your possessions.

Check you have adequate insurance cover. Photograph and record your valuables to assist any insurance claim or Police report. This will assist police in identifying any items recovered.

General Maintenance

Never leave anything that can be used by a thief to gain entry lying around the garden. Overgrown bushes prevent neighbours seeing into your garden and allow criminals to go unseen.

Social Media

Consider what you are putting on social media, especially if you are going on holiday or attending weddings, functions or posting pictures with jewellery. Criminals search for this information to create a list of empty houses. Your social media accounts should be set to friends only.

Rural Properties

Harden your perimeter. Consider one point of entry/ exit and secure with a good quality steel gate whilst taking into account any access rights.

Install Adequate Lighting. Well-placed outdoor lighting can deter criminals and help you spot them if they do approach your property.

Secure Outbuildings. Lock barns, sheds, and other outbuildings. Ensure all external doors are well maintained and fitted with good quality locks.

Remove keys from vehicles. Don't make it easy for criminals, always remove the keys and where possible lock them away in secure cabinets.

Mark your property. Keep a record of all tools and equipment with photographs and serial numbers. Consider using a DNA marking product such as Selecta DNA.

Secure your fuel. All fuel tanks should be fitted with locking fuel caps. Locate tanks away from roads, so not to be seen from passing traffic.

Unusual Activity

Report any unusual activity to Police. Criminals will often call offering to carry out work in order to identify vulnerable targets.

Neighbourhood Watch Scotland Alerts help you stay up to date with the latest crime, safety and resilience news for your local area. To receive free alerts and download a copy of the Safer Neighbourhoods Safer Communities booklet go to

www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk





















Officers and staff from the Stonehaven Community Policing Team can be called upon to take part in a range of duties

I am John McOuat, one of five Sergeants based within the Kincardine and Mearns (K&M) Community Policing Team.

I have twenty years Police service, with the last ten years as a Police Sergeant. I have always been a uniformed officer, from response, community and partnerships to specialisms as part of operational support within the City of Aberdeen. For the last two years I have had the privilege to serve here in K&M.

K&M covers from North Water Bridge in the south to the Aberdeen City boundary in the north and follows the river Dee from the city boundary to Crathes in the west. This is an area of outstanding beauty inclusive of rugged coastline, fishing villages, rural farmland and forestry with the major population centres of Stonehaven, Portlethen and Laurencekirk. At the heart of all this runs the A90 and A92 as major arterial routes for traffic travelling North and South.

This brings with it many varied and challenging Policing activities, but at the heart of everything we do is keeping people safe. My officers, colleagues and I are working 24/7 improving the safety and wellbeing of the people we serve here in K&M.

K&M is a beautiful and safe place to live, with relatively low levels of crime. However we can only operate effectively with the support of our local community, whether that be reporting crime or suspicious activity or taking simple steps to prevent becoming a victim of crime.

As the nights get longer, officers from the K&M Community Policing Team will be carrying out hi-visibility patrols across the area during the hours of darkness as part of the 'After Dark' initiative. Officers will be looking to engage with residents and to provide basic advice on home security.

Criminals remain largely opportunistic and favour targeting poorly lit, dark or insecure properties. Simple measures such as keeping all windows and doors locked, setting your house alarm (if fitted) and switching on your timer lights can make a big difference.

As well as providing advice our officers will continue to carry out high visibility patrols on our busy road network checking suspicious vehicles moving during the hours of darkness and dealing robustly with those intent on committing crime.









Tis the season to be jolly, but unfortunately, it's also the season for bike theft. With the influx of new bikes under Christmas trees, it's more important than ever to ensure these gifts are protected, as they are often targeted by thieves.

It's essential to prioritise security in order to protect your investment and a crucial aspect often overlooked is the quality of your bike lock.

Cheap, low-quality locks can be easily overcome by determined thieves. These locks may offer a false sense of security, leaving your bike vulnerable to theft. A compromised lock can not only result in financial loss but also emotional distress.

The Power of Certification

A bike lock certified to Secured by Design (SBD) or Sold Secure standards offers a significant advantage in terms of security. These certifications are awarded to products that have undergone rigorous testing and meet specific criteria designed to deter thieves.

SBD Certification

This certification is recognised by the police and insurance companies as a reliable indicator of a product's security. SBD-certified locks are designed to be more difficult to cut, drill or pick.

Sold Secure

This certification is also highly respected and provides a similar level of assurance. Sold Secure-certified locks have been tested for their resistance to various theft methods, including brute force and more sophisticated techniques.

Why Choose a Certified Lock?

Certified locks are less attractive to thieves due to their enhanced security features. This can give you peace of mind and may potentially lower your insurance premiums. Many insurance companies offer discounts on bike insurance policies when the bike is secured with a certified lock. This can save you money over the long term.

Knowing that your bike is protected by a robust lock can provide you with a sense of security.

Tips for Choosing a Certified Lock

Compare different models and brands to find the best option for your needs and budget.

Ensure that the lock is certified by a reputable organization like SBD or Sold Secure.

Different lock types have varying levels of security. Chain locks, U-locks, and folding locks are popular options. Levels of protection range from Bronze (lowest) to Diamond (highest).

By choosing a certified bike lock this Christmas, you're not only protecting your investment but also taking proactive steps to prevent theft and enjoy your cycling experience with peace of mind.

Mark and Protect Your Bike

Register your bike on Bike Register. Every Police force in the UK uses the database to search for lost or stolen bikes.

Marking your bike using a certified forensic asset marking or etching kit is a highly effective, visible deterrent to thieves and an established method of reducing theft.

www.bikeregister.com

For further advice regarding bike security visit www.scotland.police.uk

Apply now.
Easy job.
Big cash pay outs.
No experience necessary*

*must be willing to provide bank details and break the law.

Be wary of offers of easy cash. You may be approached by fraudsters online or in person. They may post what looks like a genuine job ad then ask for your bank details.

If you let this happen you are involved in money laundering which is a crime. Allowing your bank account to be used to send and receive funds for other people makes you a money mule.

The law does not accept ignorance as a defence.

Follow this advice

- Don't give your bank account details to anyone unless you know and trust them.
- Be cautious of unsolicited offers of easy money.
- Research any company that makes you a job offer and make sure their contact details are genuine.
- Be wary of job offers from overseas.
 It will be harder for you to find out if they are legitimate.
- Be wary of job ads that are written in poor English with grammatical errors and spelling mistakes.

If it sounds to good to be true it probably is.

Visit www.moneymules.co.uk to find out more



RURAL Domestic Heating Fuel Theft

Securing and protecting a domestic kerosene heating fuel tank, especially one located outside, involves several key measures to prevent theft.

Location and Visibility

Position the tank in a well-lit, visible area. Avoid secluded spots that are easily accessible to intruders. Installing motion-activated lights can deter potential thieves.

Physical Barriers

Enclose the tank within a secure, lockable cage or fence. This adds an extra layer of protection and makes unauthorised access more difficult. Ensure the enclosure is robust and cannot be easily dismantled.

Locks and Alarms

Use high-quality locks on the tank's fill cap and any access points. Consider installing an alarm system that triggers if the tank is tampered with. Modern systems can send alerts to your phone or a monitoring service.

Surveillance

Install CCTV cameras to monitor the area around the tank. Visible cameras can act as a deterrent, while recorded footage can be invaluable for police investigations if an incident occurs.

Regular Inspections

Conduct frequent checks of the tank and its surroundings. Look for signs of tampering, leaks or damage. Regular maintenance can prevent issues from escalating and ensure the tank remains secure.

Community Awareness

Engage with your neighbours and local community. A neighbourhood watch scheme can be effective in deterring crime. Informing your neighbours about the presence of a fuel tank and encouraging vigilance can enhance security.

Anti-Virus Scam



In the ever-evolving landscape of online threats, one scam remains persistent: the anti-virus scam email. Masquerading as legitimate security alerts from brands like McAfee, AVG, and Norton, these emails trick users into clicking malicious links or downloading infected files. Understanding these scams and spotting them is crucial for digital security.

The Typical Scam

Anti-virus scam emails often start with urgency, claiming your computer is infected with severe malware. They may detail a 'critical security breach' and direct you to click a link or download an attachment. Some emails claim your antivirus subscription is set to renew automatically and ask you to contact a 'support team' to cancel.

Calling the provided number connects you with a scammer who asks for your contact and bank details to secure a 'refund.'

Red Flags to Watch For

Legitimate companies address you by name. 'Dear User' is a red flag.

Scammers use urgency to pressure immediate action. Be wary of claims that your computer is at risk if you don't act immediately.

Hover over links without clicking. If the URL doesn't match the expected domain, it's likely a scam.

Legitimate companies invest in quality control. Poor grammar or spelling mistakes are suspicious.

Be cautious of unexpected attachments; they could be malicious.

How to Protect Yourself

Check the sender's email address. Legitimate emails come from verified addresses.

Be sceptical of urgent messages. Verify urgent claims before acting.

Never click on suspicious links. Type URLs directly into your browser.

Keep your software updated. Ensure your operating system and anti-virus software are up to date.

Mark dodgy emails as 'spam' to divert them to your junk folder.

Report email scams to report@phishing.gov.uk and suspicious websites to the National Cyber Security Centre.

Get advice from the National Cyber Security Centre on avoiding email scams at www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/phishing-scams

Stay vigilant to protect your digital security.

Crime Alert

A selection of crimes affecting residents from across Grampian

Online Sales Scam

An Aberdeen based business sold over £20,000 of goods to an online customer, receiving payment by credit card. The payment cleared initially but was subsequently blocked by the bank - after the goods had been delivered.

Garage Theft

An Aberdeen based cyclist had his garage broken into and four bicycles stolen totalling nearly £10,000. The bicycles were secured within the garage but with poor quality locks.

Celebrity Endorsed Investment

An Aberdeen male found a celebrity endorsed investment programme after an online search. He invested £30,000 over a 3-month period and lost his savings.

Banking Scam

An elderly Aberdeen resident received a phone call on his landline claiming to be from his banks fraud team. A female claiming to be from his bank attended at his home to collect his defective bank cards along with his PIN numbers. It was a scam and he lost £10,000.

Online Employment Scam

A woman received a WhatsApp message offering a job opportunity working from home involving boosting reviews on Google. In order to be paid and reach higher wages she was asked to open a crypto currency account. The victim believed she was investing her salary and lost £3,000.

Invoice Scam

An Aberdeen family emigrated abroad and employed a shipping company to deal with their move. On completion of the move the family received an email claiming the shipping companies bank details had changed. The family made the payment to a fraudulent company and they lost £15,000.

Online Extortion

A 21-year-old Aberdeen man lost £1,500 to an online scammer who he believed was a woman he had recently befriended online. The scammer threatened to publish intimate images the victim had shared with his new 'friend.'

Facebook Scam

An Aberdeen female regularly followed the fan group of a famous actor on social media. She was approached by email with the chance to join a VIP group to receive personal videos and details. It was a scam and she lost £1,200.

Telephone Scam

An Aberdeenshire man lost £5,000 after receiving a text message from an unknown number claiming to be his son. His 'son' claimed he had a new mobile telephone, and his online account had been frozen. The victim transferred £500 to a third party. Later that same day, further money was asked to be transferred. The victim contacted his son on his old number and discovered he had been scammed.

Vinted Scam

A Moray woman was trying to sell clothing on the second-hand clothing site Vinted. The victim was contacted by someone claiming to be a Vinted chat operator, who

advised that she would need to have £300 in the Vinted account to sell items. The victim clicked on a link and was advised to use a money transfer company. A further £300 was requested for further authentication before she realised it was a scam.

Online Lottery Scam

A 79-year-old Aberdeenshire female was contacted online stating she had won £8000. To 'release the winnings,' she was asked to purchase £850 of Apple Gift cards and send pictures of the barcodes. The 'winnings' were never delivered.

Tasking scam

An Aberdeenshire female was contacted by a fake marketing agency asking her to review hotels online for payment. The victim downloaded a money transfer app to receive her earnings and was asked to transfer money initially. The website of the marketing company looked professional, and she transferred £9000 which she subsequently lost.

Theft, Mintlaw

Farm buildings were broken into near Mintlaw. Several items were stolen including a Honda quad bike, rolls of barbed wire, McCulloch chainsaw and a quad sprayer.

Theft, Ellon

Police are investigating a break-in to outbuildings at a rural property near Ellon. Items stolen include an Ifor Williams twin axled trailer, Ifor Williams triple axled trailer, Yamaha Grizzly 660 quad bike, quad Spray Tank, Stiga ride-on lawnmower and a Wessex lawnmower.

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

Twitter

www.twitter.com/NorthEPolice

Facebook

www.facebook.com/ NorthEastPoliceDivision

North East Division Crime Reduction Team

Moray

PC Richard Russell richard.russell@scotland.police.uk

Aberdeenshire

PC Mike Urquhart michael.urquhart@scotland.police.uk

Aberdeen City

PC Mark Irvine mark.irvine@scotland.police.uk

