

Police Scotland submission of 3 February 2023

PE1971/B: Take Robust Action to Stop Motorcycle Theft

Recording

Under the Crime Classification scheme Police Scotland report on “Theft of motor vehicle and contents (including taking and driving away)”. This includes all “motor vehicles” and there is no data recorded to allow robust disaggregation to types of motor vehicles. While work remains ongoing to roll out the National Crime Recording system it will not be possible to provide the data requested although we will revisit this when nationally consistent data is available.

Operation Soteria

Operation Soteria is Edinburgh Division’s well established city-wide initiative focused on tackling motorcycle thefts and related anti-social behaviour. Last year’s operation ran between June to September, with our multi-themed response having included the deployment of the Division’s very own Operation Orbit officers. Trained in the use of off-road motorbikes, these officers completed targeted patrols to identify offenders, prevent and deter further incidents, whilst also providing community reassurance.

Operation Soteria’s enforcement activities resulted in 36 arrests, 185 charges for a variety of offences, and the recovery of 131 motorcycles, with a total value in excess of £600,000.

Understanding the impact on motorcycle owners and communities alike, we remain committed to tackling the theft and reckless use of motorcycles, and while this year’s period of intensification has now concluded, supported by Road Policing colleagues, our locally based Initiative Teams, Response, Community and CID Officers continue their efforts to identify offenders, prevent and deter further incidents, and engage with communities.

Prevention remains key to addressing these issues.

An integral part of Operation Soteria, our Prevention, Interventions and Partnership team completed a comprehensive suite of engagement /awareness raising, providing crime prevention and personal safety / security advice, across the motorcycling community, and more specifically, motorcycling tourists visiting the Capital over the summer period.

Whilst not exhaustive, stakeholder engagement included:

- Edinburgh based holiday accommodation outlets / operators and booking sites
- The AA / motorcycling magazines / tour companies
- The Scottish Business Resilience Centre
- The German and Dutch Consulates
- Ferry operators and ports
- Visit Scotland
- North Coast 500 web site
- Police colleagues in mainland Europe

To ensure accessibility and maximise our reach, materials including CrimeStopper literature, were developed and provided in multiple languages.

Wider activities included:

- Engagement with local motorcycling businesses
- Car park site visits and staff awareness raising across Edinburgh
- Discussions with City of Edinburgh Council around the provision of ground anchors and signage
- Sharing of the 'Mummy's Boy' short film on social media and with Lothian Association of Youth Clubs. This film was made by local young people for young people, and seeks to deter 'joyriding'
- The release of prevention materials on social media, including a motorcycle security video developed by our Prevention, Interventions and Partnership team
- All prevention materials shared with Neighbourhood Watch Alert
- Additional officers trained in the use of DNA tagging spray. This spray can be used to 'tag' a suspected perpetrator (rider or passenger), their clothing and/or a stolen motorcycle, leaving a uniquely coded but invisible DNA and providing forensic evidence to link them to a specific crime.

Looking ahead, our Prevention, Interventions and Partnership team will continue to broaden their network and contacts, schedule crime prevention events at motorcycle retailers and maintain dialogue with the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency to seek to secure the inclusion of motorcycle security awareness within Compulsory Basic Training (UK wide).

Notwithstanding which, the Police cannot prevent or tackle the root causes of offending alone and we continue to work collaboratively with Strategic partners as part of the Edinburgh Partnership and at a locality level, within Community Improvement Partnerships and Locality Community Planning Partnerships.

These frameworks are complemented by the work of our Community and School Link Officers, our Youth Justice Sergeant and our VOW team, wherein officers work with Peer Mentors to actively identify and support vulnerable young people on the cusp of offending or with experience of the criminal justice system to make positive life choices, reducing harm and breaking the cycle of re-offending. These tenets also underpin the city's Serious and Organised Crime Early Intervention Service – 'Sidestep' - which sees Edinburgh Division, City of Edinburgh Council and Action for Children work collaboratively to divert young people from involvement in serious and organised crime.

As Divisional priorities, Edinburgh Division, supported by partners, will continue to tackle acquisitive crime, anti-social behaviour and road safety concerns.