

## **BUSINESS AND RURAL CRIME**

### **MAKE OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS, TOWN AND CITY CENTRES AND RURAL COMMUNITIES SAFER BY REDUCING THE OPPORTUNITIES TO COMMIT CRIME**

Lead Responsibility: Retail Crime Partnership; Rural Crime Partnership and Organised Crime Task Force

Partners on Retail Crime Working Group: Department of Justice (DOJ), Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM), Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) Representatives, Retailers Against Crime (RAC).

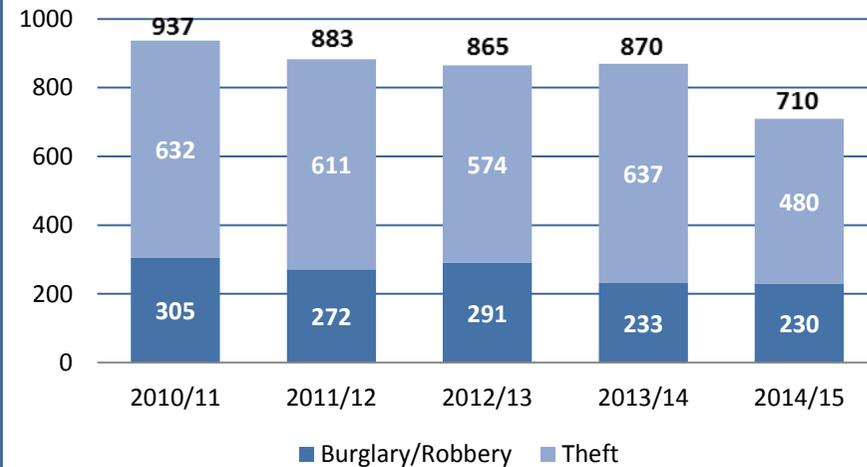
Partners on Rural Crime Partnership: Department of Justice (DOJ), Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, NFU Mutual and the Ulster Farmers' Union.

Performance Indicators:

#### Shoplifting and Robbery of Business Property Offences



#### Agricultural Crime (Burglary, Robbery and Theft Offences for Agricultural Activity) by Type of Offence



**Story behind the figures/context:**

PSNI do not have a distinct category of 'business crime', however, they do provide figures for offences related to 'Robbery of Business Property'. The number of such offences peaked at 1,404 in 2002/03, following which there has been a general, if fluctuating, downward trend. Figures for 2014/15 show a 2.1% increase on 2013/14, with the number of offences rising from 243 to 248. The majority of robbery of business property offences relate to armed robbery, with 181 offences (73%) in 2014/15.

Shoplifting offences have remained relatively constant. There was a general upwards trend between 2003/04 and 2009/10 when the highest level of shoplifting was experienced, with 6,754 offences recorded. Levels then fell each year to 2012/13 before increasing again in 2013/14. The level of 6,495 in 2014/15 is the second highest recorded since 1998/99 and shows an increase of 1.9% on 2013/14.

The focus of the action plan is on agricultural crime rather than crime occurring in rural areas. Agricultural crime figures represent offences of burglary, robbery and theft where the victim is involved in an agricultural-based activity. Overall the number of such offences has shown an overall downwards trend since 2010/11, when 937 such offences were recorded. At 710, the level in 2014/15 is the lowest recorded (24.2% lower compared to 2010/11 and 18.4% lower than when compared to 2013/14).

Provisional in-year figures show that there was a 22% reduction in agricultural crime in April-September 2015 when compared to the same period in the previous financial year. (Source: PSNI Agricultural and Rural Crime in Northern Ireland: Quarterly Update to 30 September 2015)

What we agreed to achieve in 2015-2017	What we did in 2015/16
<p><b>Ensure that town and city centres are safe and welcoming spaces for all</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A <b>Retail Crime Working Group</b>, consisting of key stakeholders such as the PSNI, RAC and BCCM, developed a retail crime prevention booklet which was distributed to retailers through PCSPs, RAC, BCCM and the PSNI.</li> <li>• The <b>Retail Crime Working Group</b> also supported the delivery of a RAC regional conference held on 23 September 2015, which highlighted best practice in tackling retail crime, including up-to-date advice on emerging issues.</li> <li>• <b>DOJ</b> in conjunction with the <b>PSNI</b> and the <b>NIPB</b> held a business crime workshop on 11 February 2016. The workshop provided an opportunity for the business community to identify any gaps in current service provision, explore issues raised during the Justice Committee Business Crime Stakeholder Event, in May 2015, and the Assembly debate in December 2015 and contribute to future priorities for the next Community Safety Strategy.</li> <li>• <b>DOJ's Organised Crime Taskforce</b> has continued to work with the Chamber of Commerce, Confederation of British Industry, Federation of Small Businesses and other business representatives to gain an understanding of the challenges currently facing the business community with regard to crime and to provide information and support.</li> <li>• <b>PSNI</b> launched a regional Safe Shop Scheme, a practical training package for managers and sales assistants working in retail outlets.</li> <li>• <b>PSNI</b> developed a text-alert system and dedicated e-mail address to facilitate the two-way flow of information with representatives from the business community.</li> <li>• <b>PSNI</b> reviewed their Business Crime Good Practice Guide and have circulated this to Districts and key stakeholders to create a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>PSNI</b> continued to assist businesses in determining what steps/measures they should be considering in relation to crime, through the development of a Business Crime Reduction Risk Self-Assessment.</li> <li>• <b>PSNI</b> developed a communication strategy through a range of channels; social media platforms, traditional media, face-to-face briefings, delivering presentations at business forums and training workshops reinforcing crime prevention messaging.</li> <li>• <b>PSNI</b> also appointed a senior officer as lead for business crime, whose role will be to take forward the PSNI contribution to business crime along with the NIPB and the DoJ.</li> <li>• <b>RAC</b> continued to provide their members with ongoing crime prevention advice through daily/weekly bulletins and monthly newsletters and through delivery of training sessions on the latest scams being used by offenders.</li> <li>• Initiatives being delivered across the PCSP network include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Belfast PCSP</b> – delivered a business safety initiative for small to medium sized traders in East Belfast in order to educate and discuss crime preventative techniques regarding counterfeit money, break-ins and burglaries as well as incendiaries.</li> <li>○ <b>Derry and Strabane PCSP</b> – manages the Derry and Strabane district council contract for the City Centre CCTV scheme.</li> <li>○ <b>Mid and East Antrim PCSP</b> – continued to deliver a Town Centre Warden project in Ballymena which has successfully contributed to a reduction in retail crime in the town centre.</li> <li>○ <b>Newry and Mourne PCSP</b> – developed a local promotion campaign to promote the Safe Shop Scheme in their area including the use of a Facebook poll to decide the name of the campaign, with a ‘mascot’ called Constable NeMo.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Support safer rural communities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DOJ</b> continued to support the implementation of the Executive’s Rural White</li> </ul>

Paper and Action Plan.

- Continued to work with partners through the **Rural Crime Partnership** to identify issues of concern and to develop and support pilot initiatives to tackle agricultural crime.
- **DOJ Assets Recovery Community Scheme** funding provided to Newry, Mourne and Down PCSP to pilot a Freeze Branding initiative in the South Armagh Area.
- Funding provided by **DOJ** to Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon PCSP to pilot a forensic marking scheme to deter the theft of farm equipment.
- Funding provided by **DOJ** to Mid Ulster PCSP to support the development of a Rural Crime DVD.
- **DOJ, PSNI** and **DARD** Involved in an ongoing engagement with the banking sector to reaffirm processes for handling third party cheques.
- **DOJ's Organised Crime Taskforce (OCTF)** continues to work to address organised crimes affecting rural locations such as fuel laundering. Rural crime is also one of the priority areas for the newly formed cross border Joint Agency Task Force.
- **PSNI** have continued to support a range of initiatives to help prevent rural crime including:
  - promotion of the Farm Watch Scheme - which promotes the importance of farming communities being vigilant, availing of crime prevention measures provided by the scheme and improving communication between rural communities and the police.
  - providing tailored crime prevention advice to farmers based on surveys of their farms, delivered trailer marking events and have provided Datatag marking kits to mark small tools, chainsaws etc.

- developing a pilot initiative with the Young Farmers Club in an attempt to develop a more security conscious mind-set in new / upcoming members of the farming and rural community.
  - supporting the Neighbourhood Watch scheme through the delivery of a series of evening information and crime prevention events.
  - led on the delivery of a two-day livestock crime awareness training course at Loughry Campus. This course is designed to raise awareness of livestock crime and to develop partnership working with key stakeholders to prevent and detect livestock theft and fraud.
- Initiatives being delivered across the PCSP network include the following:
    - **Lisburn and Castlereagh PCSP** – developed a personal safety event which was delivered at the Balmoral Show in 2015. The event provided crime prevention advice to the farming community and also sought their views, via an online survey, on rural crime and the impact it had from both a business and family perspective. The survey results were shared with key stakeholders to inform considerations on crime prevention. Following the success of this event, a further event was delivered at Hillsborough in September.
    - **Mid Ulster PCSP** – have delivered an engagement event for the local farming community to raise awareness of rural crime and preventative measures to deter this type of crime.
    - **Ards and North Down PCSP** - Street pastor scheme operates in Newtownards / Comber and the rural and urban villages across the council area to reduce alcohol related street crime and ASB.