



Analysis of Stolen Goods Markets in the UK

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Background to the Research

In recognition of the impact that crime has upon communities, the government's 2021 Beating Crime Plan made a commitment to tackling neighbourhood crime. Under the plan, the government set an objective to reduce volume acquisitive crimes which are understood to affect particular geographic locales disproportionately and significantly undermine the quality of life of those living within them. As part of this work, the Home Office has commissioned several projects which seek to establish a greater understanding of stolen goods markets in the UK, and the current work contributes to this broader undertaking. This workstream is built on the recognition that profit-seeking is the primary motivation for acquisitive criminality and thus the identification of, and intervention in, routes to the realisation of profit must play an essential role in tackling this area of criminality. Building on the initial scoping project carried out by Gwent Police, the current project seeks to establish a greater understanding of the commodities stolen in UK neighbourhood acquisitive crime, and the markets associated with their disposal.

Reflecting the priorities of the government's 'Beating Crime Plan', the present analysis of stolen goods markets focuses on bulk acquisitive offences which affect citizens in the context of their private lives. The work therefore considers data in relation to residential burglary, theft from the person, personal robbery, theft of a motor vehicle (TOMV) and theft from a motor vehicle (TFMV).



A Note on Methods

In the first phase of the research, analysis of police data was used to ascertain which commodity types were most frequently reported stolen in neighbourhood acquisitive crimes. The temporal scope of the research was partly determined by the Covid-19 pandemic, as it was acknowledged that recent crime incidence data was likely to yield anomalous results on account of the disruption of routine activities during this period. In recognition of the pandemic's significant disruption of crime rates and criminal behaviour, therefore, a decision was made to collect data for the years 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 so that a pre-pandemic baseline might also be established. The principal aim was to gather data capable of elucidating which property types are most commonly associated with key neighbourhood acquisitive crime types.

The second phase of the project took these commodity categories as its focus and sought to understand more about the disposal routes associated with them. In order to elucidate the nature of these key stolen goods markets, the project conducted interviews with those who have been convicted for their involvement in one, or more, of the five offence types of personal robbery, theft from the person, residential burglary and theft of, and from vehicles. Initially, interviewees were accessed via Integrated Offender Management force leads who circulated letters of invitation to those enrolled on their prolific offender tagging schemes. This remit was later extended to include those with extensive histories of acquisitive offending, but who were not currently enrolled on tagging schemes. Finally, snowball sampling allowed respondents to refer people for participation in the research. In total, 43 perpetrators volunteered their time to participate in the research, though the data from only 42 interviews is discussed in the report. A decision was made to

interviews is discussed in the report. A decision was made to discount the material from one interview as it was felt that a police officer, who attended with the respondent, exerted influence over the participant's responses.

Interviews took place as a mixture of face-to-face, online, and telephone conversations, depending on the geographical location and preference of the interviewee. All respondents took part in a single, semi-structured interview which lasted around an hour. During interviews, participants were asked about their offending history, their decision-making and the disposal routes used for the goods they stole. Online interviews with key police personnel were also used to understand more about existing knowledge around disposal routes for stolen goods.

The research also sought to identify means of reducing the profitability of acquisitive crime by reducing the ease with which stolen goods can be sold. This strand of the research involved interviewing representatives from a range of sectors including the insurance industry, not-for-profit organisations, product manufacturers and vendors, those involved in the provision of security goods and services, in addition to those in key policing roles. Finally, the research involved the analysis of data provided by police forces and ROCUs relating to OCGs and Priority Individuals involved in acquisitive neighbourhood offending.



The Offenders and their M.O.s

All of the offenders in the study were male, and all had significant and sustained criminal histories. They were, without exception, drawn from disadvantaged backgrounds, though the degree of deprivation they had experienced varied markedly. A significant number discussed their experience of broken homes, the care system, the loss of family members and homelessness. At the time of interview, a number of respondents occupied incredibly precarious positions whereby they did not have access to suitable accommodation, and they felt at significant risk of reoffending. Drug use was also a significant factor underpinning the criminality of the men in the study. Many reported being heavily addicted to heroin and cocaine and their addiction was described as being a catalyst for their offences. Others discussed the way in which they often would commit crimes under the influence of drugs or would use the profits from their offences to 'party' for prolonged periods.

Interviewer: *'Would you say your crimes were mainly driven by the need to buy drugs, then?'*

Respondent: *'Every single one of them... Sometimes, I'd... in fact, sometimes I didn't even need to go and burgle the houses. I remember one, I burgled a house before with £300 in my pocket and (inaudible) for crack and brown, so there was no need for me to do it, it's just that... yeah I used to do it like a job, for drugs.'*

Drug use was a dominant theme throughout interviews. Those with significant drug addictions described the need to expedite the process of selling stolen goods. They reported going directly from an offence to a local handler to sell goods and this money was used

immediately to buy drugs:

Respondent: *'Because if I saw money all I saw was drugs. If money went in my hands, it wouldn't be there, it would be gone as quick as it came. I mean as soon as it goes in my pocket or my hand, I'm making a phone call for drugs.'*

This was representative of the experiences of the more chaotic, less professional, acquisitive offenders who tended to have fairly serious drug addictions. They all reported selling goods as soon after their crimes as possible.

Interviewer: *'So would you sell the things you stole immediately, or would you hide them somewhere for a while?'*

Respondent: *'No, I'd always get rid as soon as, straight away, like. I'd take the stuff straight from doing over a house, go right there. You don't want to be hanging around with stuff. The police know it isn't yours. Knows it ain't legit. You want it out as soon as possible. You can't take it home, so you sell it straight away. Night times weren't as easy. Night meant you had to take them to certain people, you can't just walk into a shop then, can you?'*

In some cases, goods were directly exchanged for drugs, but this was something that people tried to avoid because of the derisory offers drug dealers would make for items. Those who were addicted to drugs were far more likely report being offered what they considered to be unreasonably low prices for the items they sold. Their addictions, in short, made them easily exploitable. Their desire to realise profit immediately also made them vulnerable to being caught, as the respondent below explains:

Respondent: *'You find with addicts they do the same thing, the same time every day, the same thing, smoking, smoking, stealing, smoking, it's just the same circle. Smoking, stealing, selling, smoking, stealing. I mean they start looking like a tramp, withdrawn, you're not of sound mind, you're going off the scale so there is no [point] in living with the way people think and how to (inaudible) as an addict, they just go around, they don't care who they sell it to... Yeah one time it got me caught by going into a shop with CCTV. Because I done a burglary, went across the road to a shop and was trying to sell the stuff in there... Straightaway. Heart was racing. Need to use. And I'm, I've got stuff and I don't know where to go with it so I'm just going round asking do you want, do you want. And just keeping going around until you find, because somebody comes along and goes do you know what alright I'll give you 30 pounds for it and you think it could be worth god knows how much but you take it because you've been trying to sell it for the last god knows how long and you don't want to have it round you, because you don't want to get nicked with it.'*

The social networks associated with drug sales appeared to play a significant role in facilitating acquisitive crime and the subsequent sale of goods. Local drugs networks were described by the vast majority of respondents as being pivotal to their involvement in acquisitive offending. In some cases, local drug dealers were heavily involved in handling stolen goods or were crucial to establishing connections between thieves and buyers. In others, drug dealers were directly involved in commissioning crime by providing taskings for TOMV offences. Consequently, there appeared to be considerable overlap between nominals involved in drug supply and those involved in the movement of stolen goods.

Respondents whose offending tended to be more carefully planned

and professional and who did not report having significant drug addictions, also reported regularly using handlers who were also simultaneously involved in drug supply. However, these transactions tended to be less exploitative than those detailed above. Moreover, the offenders in this latter group tended to behave very differently to those with heavy addictions when disposing of stolen goods. As they were not driven by the desperation to service drug habits, they tended to be more methodical in their disposal of goods, taking more time over the separation of goods and, in some cases, storing goods for sale at a later date. This was, of course, dependent on having access to storage facilities, but a number of respondents described doing so in order to make bulk sales or to target particular types of buyers in a strategic manner.

Interviewer: *'You just mentioned there you would sell a load of stuff together, so is it fair to say that you sell things in bulk, you don't do it individually?'*

Respondent: *'It depends how much I had. I mean, obviously, sometimes I'd have a fair bit, and I'd probably do the main things first, so if they get a couple of grand straightaway, then I'd hold back. Obviously, I'd go off, go and use drugs, go and book into a hotel or whatever, have a bit of a party for a week or two, then you're sort of gradually over a period of weeks, you'll start taking the other bits in to slowly... on a slowly basis. I wouldn't do it normally all in one go... I'd put it somewhere else. Somewhere just... Not at an address known to police for me.... you'd have to be a bit smart about it.'*

Another respondent described his involvement with a goods buyer who would only make bulk purchases:

Respondent: *'Well, he was just this bloke that we knew through*

[Gary] who we bought most of our smoke off, yeah? Introduced us, yeah. 'Cos he knew we were grafting and had stuff to shift. He knew we were good for it, he could take stuff for us. Move it without doubt. He was well set up for it, [Pete]. But he didn't mess about. Like I said, he'd only come if it was worth his interest. If we had enough. So, we had to wait til we'd done loads of jobs and we got enough to call him, for him to come over. 'Cos I think he doesn't come from round here.'

Interviewer: *'So how much would you need to have to call [Pete]?'*

Respondent: *'Well, he liked bikes. That's why we started using the garage. A f*cking nightmare, bikes. You know? So we would have a load of bikes waiting. But he liked good ones, mountain ones. Didn't p*ss about with any old crap. He'd take some electrics. We'd laugh about that sh*t. Like kitchen stuff. We never offered him the jewellery, though. I dunno, for him, mores the better. Like ten, twelve bikes a tonne of electrics, DIY stuff, garden stuff like strimmers and that, like gardening stuff.'*

The respondents and their acquisitive offences were embedded in well-established networks of informal relationships which are pivotal to understanding the movement of stolen goods associated with neighbourhood crimes. This network was described by one man as 'an underworld' which is 'a mixture of high street businesses and people just on the street' where people operate 'in the same little circles' and business tends not to 'go outside the circle'. In the accounts of all respondents, high street businesses played a pivotal role in allowing them to realise profits from their acquisitive crimes. These businesses involved outlets such as 'cash for gold' services, second-hand, or pawn, shops and independent jewellers and these were central to ensuring the profitability of offending. Respondents

were cognisant of the changes in regulations which governed financial exchanges in these settings. They discussed the introduction of the requirement to show ID when selling goods, or of the increasing presence of CCTV systems in shops. Some were uncomfortable about the implications of these changes and tried to circumvent the associated risks by 'sub-contracting' the sale process to someone further down the criminal hierarchy, most often a local addict or young person. Others suggested that often, those in shops were willing to bypass the need for ID or were willing to record false names against sales. On occasion, respondents were already members of second-hand stores and they merely continued to present with goods without being flagged as suspicious, underscoring the need for better police engagement with this type of commercial outlet.

The vast majority of respondents lacked the skills and confidence to engage with internet sales. Participation in online selling was limited to those involved in the theft of tools and bicycles. Eleven of those who stole tools from vehicles reported using a range of websites to sell their goods. Online sales allowed TFMV offenders to almost professionalise their activities, with one offender commenting that he ran 'a pretty impressive tool business.' On account of the anonymity they afforded, and the geographically dispersed markets to which they offered access, online sales platforms were unique in the way that they offered offenders a veneer of legitimacy. Only six people reported selling bikes online. Some of this engagement was fairly limited, with only two suggesting that their experience mirrored that of the TFMV offenders who had established 'successful online tool outlets'. However, one of the main barriers to being able to sell large numbers of bicycles online was the issue of storage. As many respondents lacked access to storage facilities, bikes often took an indirect route to online sales platforms, passing first through the hands of a third party. Many of those who stole bikes, sold to

handlers who specialised in bicycles and who were known to sell them online in high volumes. Thus, the number of respondents who had capitalised directly on the growth of online marketplaces remained fairly limited and confined to the specific commodity markets of tools and bicycles. However, many others also indirectly serviced online sales by selling to a third party.

Conversely, the respondents appeared to be much more responsive to wider technological changes when selecting targets for theft. They described the way in which the commodities they favoured altered over the course of their criminal careers in response to changes in market demand. When asked about the types of property he would target, one respondent said:

Respondent: *'Anything that I can get rid of, I will take.'*

Interviewer: *'Okay. And is there anything that you can't get rid of? Anything that is a real pain to get rid of?'*

Respondent: *'The things are just, value of things have gone right down. Like years ago, TV will be, TV and (inaudible) and videos and DVD players and stuff like that would, when they first came out those things were valuable but now these things are no longer valuable... Because they're so cheap to make that the price of a brand new TV now cost less than what it did when you was buying it second hand back in the days. You can't get rid of these things now. When it comes to things like yeah TV and videos and all that kind of stuff, nobody's interested in it. It's just the main things that have got value like jewellery and credit cards.'*

All of the accounts offered by respondents indicated a shift away from electrical items as their resale value decreased markedly over

time, but this shift was also influenced by the increasing complexity associated with new forms of security on items such as phones, laptops and tablets which were perceived by thieves to engender greater risk. Their ability to deal in these commodities was dependent on their access to networks of people with specific skill sets in unlocking devices. Alternatively, the need for devices to service demand in the repair market allowed some individuals to sell devices to local repair shops and kiosks. The shift away from the theft of large electrical items also significantly altered the M.O.'s associated with burglary. As the respondents moved from handling large electrical items in their earlier careers, to focusing on the theft of items such as jewellery, car keys, cash and bank cards, the task of burglary became much more streamlined and straightforward. Recounting his involvement in an early burglary which involved the theft of multiple television sets and other electrical items, one interviewee said:

Respondent: *'I burgled a house, took stuff, dropped it off somewhere, and then gone back to take more stuff because I'm on my own.'*

The choice to work alone thus required the burglar to make multiple trips to collect goods, thus significantly increasing the risks associated with the offence. The difficulty of handling such items was described by another as something which often necessitated working with others:

Respondent: *'It was a head f*ck working back then, you couldn't carry the stuff, always needed to work with someone. Me and [Derek] worked, us together, back then and then we'd have someone drive sometimes. It weren't clean. When everyone wanted tellies, HIFIs, a proper chew on shifting that stuff... could never done it just as me, on me own, like. Always needed a car.'*

This experience was contrasted in his account with his experience of contemporary burglaries which focused on cash, jewellery and car keys:

Respondent: *'It's much quicker, man. Nothing to carry. Just a bag. In and out.'*

Thus, as targeted commodities have become smaller and more portable over time, the speed and ease with which respondents were able to execute burglaries has increased immeasurably. Not only has the need for multiple trips to carry large items diminished, the need the need to negotiate the storage and transportation of these goods has disappeared, allowing offenders to work alone, on foot and with much less effort.

The criminal careers of the men in the study appeared to develop over time, with most reporting involvement in a range of acquisitive offences. It seemed that for many TFMV offences operated as form of gateway offence into what were deemed to be more serious, risky and lucrative crimes such as burglary and robbery.

Interviewer: *'Your involvement in theft from vehicles, that's...further in the past?'*

Respondent: *'Yeah, definitely... yeah. That was like from a young... basically, my older brothers kind of put me onto that. It was their thing when they was our age, sort of thirteen, fourteen, they would give us a particular area to go to which they know was safe because normally it would be handbags or where people would walk their dogs and things like that, so it's a lot of in Hampstead area kind of thing around there where the people would park up their cars,*

normally leave a handbag, or you'd look around that area 'cos it was a more, more of an affluent area where people there was more money.'

Interviewer: *'Okay...What about the burglaries then, is that more recent?'*

Respondent: *'Yeah, burglaries is more probably... yeah, yeah, more recent for me, yeah. I didn't move onto that 'til later... 'til I had a bit more behind me'.*

There was a shared belief between the men in the study that burglaries and TOMV offences required a higher level of skill than taking items from vehicles, and they observed that these more demanding crimes were often accompanied by greater rewards. Consequently, graduation to these offences tended to come slightly later in the careers of the participants. Finally, a proportion of the acquisitive crimes perpetrated by the men in the study involved taskings from third parties and participation in these 'thefts to order' often lubricated the transition from TFMV into TOMV offences. The people who tasked respondents with the theft of vehicles were described as being those to whom they had sold items from previous TFMV offences. Interestingly, participation in these tasked TOMV offences tended to generate similar financial returns as when offenders stole vehicles and sold them independently. They also appeared to be the point at which neighbourhood offenders came into closest contact with organised crime as those to whom they delivered the cars were able to process significant numbers of vehicles in short time periods.



Theft of, and from Motor Vehicles

In the TOMV offences reported during interview, there was a very clear distinction between those involving temporary thefts of vehicles for use in further offences and permanent thefts which involved the subsequent sale of stolen vehicles to another party. Temporary thefts tended to be reported as forming part of burglary offences.

Respondents would take car keys during burglaries and use vehicles both to transport goods away from the victim's home and to commit subsequent burglaries for a short period. These respondents suggested that they would keep the car for up to a week, but suggested that being able to do so had become more complex over time:

Respondent: *'No, I'd commit a burglary on the house, take the... well, put their stuff in the car, so I'd use their car as a getaway with their goods in it, and then I'd drive somewhere in the car and obviously I just put dodgy plates on it or something. But back, well...you didn't have to worry about plates and that. Police cars didn't have ANPR and all that...But nowadays you can't drive a stolen car on the road because you'd get boxed off in about twenty minutes. There's cameras everywhere.'*

Thus, the need to steal registration plates from other cars was understood as a necessity to avoid being apprehended by the police:

Respondent: *'If I'd had a nicked car from a burglary and I know that car's obviously wanted straightaway, maybe sort of two, three days later in, if I'm driving past... it's not specifically looking for to do that, but if I drive past a car which is exactly the same as the car I've got I would pull over, pop their number plates off and stick 'em on mine... Just to kind of... it would probably just give me a few more days'*

grace with the car.'

This process was universally described as being a straightforward process that can be executed in a very short amount of time.

Interviewer: *'Yeah. Are they easy to get off?'*

Respondent: *'Well, yeah, they're just a screwdriver job. You could do the front and back in about, I don't know, in about four minutes if you're going for it.'*

Another respondent discussed the fact that he stole motorbikes which he used to commit crimes, including robberies and burglaries. The motorbikes he stole tended to be taken during residential burglaries and he would use the bikes for the period of around a week. During the time that the bikes were in his possession, he described keeping them in a location near his home, sometimes secreting them in a place like a bush.

Among those who stole vehicles temporarily for their use in crime, some would simply abandon vehicles once they were no longer useful or they became too risky, whilst others would then sell them to a third party. It was generally understood that these vehicles would be bought to be broken down for parts and they tended not to be high value vehicles:

Interviewer: *'Who would you sell the car to when you were finished with it, then?'*

Respondent: *'This gypsy [Alan]. Huge f*cker he was. Mountain of a man. He ran a breaker's yard and he'd take anything I had. He took the parts see, so he wasn't bothered about the cars. Used him for*

years, I did.'

The second type of theft involved taking vehicles for the purpose of onward sale. Those who reported their involvement in TOMV for sale were subdivided into two groups: those who stole vehicles independently and those who were tasked with the theft of specific cars on behalf of a third party. This distinction between the autonomy of offenders also appeared to bring a difference in the type of M.O. used, and this possibly relates to the respondents in the study coming into contact with more organised criminals when involved in tasked thefts. None of the respondents in the study were part of OCGs, their criminality existed at the lower end of the spectrum of criminal sophistication. However, it was possible that those executing TOMV offences on behalf of others came into contact with OCG activity. For those who stole cars independently of taskings from third parties, two-in-one Hanoi burglaries were their M.O. of choice. In response to the increasing complexities associated with stealing cars, these offenders described how their M.O. had changed over time from stealing vehicles in the street, to two-in-one key thefts. Increased security on vehicles meant that they were now required to break into houses to obtain keys or, in the case of two respondents, become involved in aggravated vehicle taking.

Respondent: *'We used to twoc loads of cars when we were young. Back then, we'd be at it all the time. It was pretty straightforward. My brother and his mates showed us how to go on, learned the trade like that, aye. But now it's not like that. You need gear, things got a lot harder. Not like it used to be.'*

Interviewer: *'So did you give up on cars then, as it became more difficult?'*

Respondent: *'For a bit, we did, aye. There was a time... But we got*

back into it when we started doing houses. Cos you can get the keys. Then it is easy again. You just have to drive away. It's even easier, I suppose.'

Once car keys became the focus of burglaries, respondents suggested that the identification of a particular type of car on a driveway was often the deciding factor when selecting properties to burgle.

Interviewer: *'How would you choose which house to break into then?'*

Respondent: *'The car, man! Always the car! You want summit that'll make you money, summit people want and, f*ck yeah, something fast so you know you're going to get away. Your Audis, your BMs, that kind of sh*t.'*

Two other respondents detailed how their TOMV M.O.'s also changed in response to increasing vehicle security. However, rather than moving toward two-in-one residential burglaries, their criminal repertoire also came to include aggravated vehicle taking:

Respondent: *'We wanted nice cars. Where the money is, yeah? And that got more complicated. It wasn't straightforward anymore, yeah? You couldn't just take cars. I mean to a certain extent, it was never straightforward with the top-end, luxury cars. People take care of those things... companies take care of their customers. But once everything became electric and immobilisers and all that stuff, it... well it changed and so we had to too.'*

Interviewer: *'So what did that mean? How did you change?'*

Respondent: *'Well we moved into taking them when neone were in*

Respondent: *Well, we moved into taking them when people were in. So you can get the keys, yeah? Been done for aggravated TDA.'*

Interviewer: *'So that sounds risky and a bit of a jump from just taking cars?'*

Respondent: *'I mean you'd be choosy about it. Ladies are what you want, really. Put up less of a fight. Ideally if she is getting in or out, yeah... catch her unawares. It's not that different to robbing, really, not when you think about it. But sometimes we'd hit cars as they stopped and that is a bit more trickier, yeah. It takes more, you have to be more upfront. Show you aren't messing around, or they'll just drive off.'*

A second group of offenders described being tasked to commit car thefts by those involved in local criminal networks, often related to local drug supply. Both historical and contemporary accounts of this type of theft were offered, with some interviewees describing their long-term involvement in thefts to order. Crucially, they suggested that involvement in these networks offered them the ability to continue their engagement in car thefts as those who sponsored their activities gave them access to equipment to facilitate thefts. Historically, this involved nominals being given items to break car windows and, as technological developments in the car industry altered the rules of the game, this developed into devices to facilitate keyless thefts. The support offered to nominals in the course of their thefts was understood to be the single determining factor that allowed them to remain in stand-alone TOMV offences.

Respondent: *'[Jeff] was always good to us. Looked after us since we were lads. Didn't just give us jobs to do, though, I mean he did, but he helped us out. He gave us good prices for the motors. Gave us what we needed.'*

Interviewer: *'How did that work, then?'*

Respondent: *'I'd have a job to do, a particular car he was looking for. And I'd have to bring it back for say five hundred or whatever. It was a good set up. Did it for years. He was at it that long, still is. Has a load of boys fetching for him. It works. For everyone, you see.'*

Interviewer: *'How did you meet him?'*

Respondent: *'I'd sell all the stereos to [Jeff] back in the day. Out of motors. So, he knew we were good for it. Knew we were bang at it. He showed us how to get them going and asked us to bring them back next time and that was it really. He lent us the gear if we needed it, whatever, to get them, to make sure they came back... and even these days, those repeaters, you know? Do you know what they are? The...'*

Interviewer: *'Yeah. To open, or start, cars without the keys? Is that what you mean?'*

Respondent: *'Exactly. Oh man, when those things came about, we thought, we couldn't believe it. So he was set up with all that man. All of it. And that changed things.'*

When these offenders were asked about the final destination of the vehicles they stole, none of them had involvement with the vehicles once they were exchanged for cash. During interview they observed that the people for whom they stole were able to process large number of vehicles, and expressed the belief that many of these vehicles were destined for overseas markets, but none had first-hand experience of this.

Mirroring the behaviours of those involved in TOMV offences, the nominals involved in TFMV offences appeared to be divided into two categories: those who committed adhoc offences which lacked planning and clear targets, and those who had a very distinctive M.O which they repeated on a regular basis. In the former category, those with drug habits tended to break into vehicles almost upon whim, often breaking windows of vehicles to liberate items such as handbags viewed through windows, but on occasion, simply to conduct exploratory searches 'to see what was there'. One of these nominals described the process he followed in TFMV offences:

Respondent: *'You need somewhere suitable to go for cars, you can't just be popping windows when there's people about...So not your say supermarket carpark or nothing. I mean sometimes a street if no-one's about but no, no we'd go up to the parks and that. Dog walkers, runners, that's what you want. Park up, leave their stuff in the car. Do it all the time they do and that's where you'd get stuff, your bags, cash, cards...'*

Another respondent described the process he followed of merely wandering around trying car door handles:

Respondent: *'...and I went round at night about half one, two in the morning just checking car doors, and surprise, surprise, it's actually... it was actually worth doing it. A lot of car doors would open, and I'd take...cards, money whatever.'*

These nominals operated at the less successful end of the TFMV offender spectrum, and it seemed that those who were more successful had a common approach, as highlighted in the following excerpt:

Interviewer: *'What would you steal from vehicles?'*

Interviewer: *What would you steal from vehicles.*

Respondent: *'Tools. Every time. Vans for tools.'*

Respondent: *'They bring in the money. You know they are there. I was set up for it. Set up to get money for them. I mean, what's the point p*ssing about with cars? What you gonna get? Those fellas get what? A bag or whatever. Tools make way more sense, don't they? Do a few trannies in a night and your sorted. That's where the shop [online sales] came from.'*

For these offenders, TFMV tool thefts became a business model which they engaged in almost to the exclusion of other offences because of the established and predictable benefits that they brought:

Respondent: *'We just did that for years, 'cos it made sense. Over time, eventually, we stopped bothering with other stuff because the tools was such good money. You can do a few in a night and just keep moving on. Once you are set up for one, you are set for them all. So, it is just repeating, repeating, repeating. Just like going to work.'*

For those who approached crime as a business, the preference for tools in TFMV offences appeared universal whilst those who were either in the earlier stages of their criminal careers, or who were less sophisticated in their approach tended towards stealing personal items from cars.



Robbery and Theft from the Person

Only nine respondents reported their involvement in robbery and theft from the person offences. There appeared to be some stigma associated with admitting participation in robbery on account of the direct contact with the victims. There was also the perception that these offences carried a degree of risk that could not be justified by the returns that they offered. Respondents suggested that robberies and theft offences offered access to items such as cash and cards and these might be obtained in less risky ways such as in TFMV offences. Drugs were understood to be important to understanding the men's willingness to take these risks:

Respondent: *'When we used to take bags. Cafés, parks, car parks. You'd just go for it. Spend a bit time checking them, to see that they aren't going anywhere, then, in! Just have the bag and away. Half the time you'd be wrecked. Didn't think about it. Thought that, it just seemed okay, like it wouldn't go wrong.'*

Two respondents admitted their involvement in robbery offences, though these appeared to be historical. They suggested that their M.O was to work across London parks. When stealing items like bags, they sought to minimise contact, surprising their victim but where contact was required to identify or take items like jewellery, they suggested that they used the pretence of obtaining a lighter or asking the time to approach victims:

Respondent: *'We used to work across the parks, Hampstead, Highgate...people walking their dogs, to work, whatever. Obviously, there used to be more money around, it's more card now to be fair. We used to get ipods that kind of thing, but now it's all phones and that's different man. We'd have sometimes have a bike, put it at an*

entrance to the place so we could move when we were done.'

Interviewer: *'Is that when you mentioned stealing motorbikes?'*

Respondent: *'Yeah, I mean if you happened to have one at that particular moment in time, it makes it easier yeah? Get the stuff and go. You wanna be gone, yeah?'*

Interviewer: *'So what would you take? How did you go about it?'*

Respondent: *'Bags, money. That stuff you can just grab and go. Watches, jewellery obviously change things yeah. You can walk up for a fag, as the time or whatever, to see what they've about him but you have to be a bit clever. You don't want to hit anyone. I mean you'd carry a shiv but never used 'em, nothin' business like that.'*



Residential Burglary

All of those involved in burglary agreed that darkness was preferable for committing crime as it allowed them greater freedom of movement on account of the 'cover' it provided them:

Respondent: *'I've done both day and night... but mainly at night I'd say. Mainly like when it was dark...I'd say it's easier at night because you can hide if you see car lights coming towards you or something like that, you can hide. It's just better at night.'*

They discussed how burglaries were easier to execute during winter months for this reason, but suggested that this consideration didn't shape their pattern of offending, rather it simply affected how they experienced the act of burglary:

Respondent: *'It's easier in winter, 'cos there is more dark around.. I mean it gets dark early, you know. Means you can get about easier. It's not like you can't in the light. You just have to do things different.'*

Whether people chose to commit burglaries in the day or night appeared to shape not only their M.O., but also their choice of targets. This happened for two reasons. In this first instance, it determined what would be available in the house:

Respondent: *'You know, laptops at night-time. During the day, you've got a bit more time to go through the bedrooms and things like that, I'd go for jewellery and things like that... obviously, I did move onto night times as well, when people were in the properties. But that's another level.'*

Interviewer: *Yeah, definitely. Did that complicate things somewhat then?*

Respondent: *'For me, you was kind of looking for different objects, then, really: it was more cash, handbags, wallets, phones.'*

In the second, it influenced which areas of the house that offenders were willing to enter as it was more likely that homeowners would be present during the night:

Respondent: *'But at night, it would be... I wouldn't personally go to a bedroom where people are sleeping. It was more a case of checking round the front room, checking round the kitchen. Maybe having a venture towards upstairs, but if the doors were closed, I wouldn't like to go somewhere where a door was closed, because I don't know what... if I open that door, I don't know what's on the other side. If I could kind of see what was going on, I'd probably have a little look about, but if not, I wouldn't.'*

The account above was representative of the perspectives offered by the burglars in the study. They wanted to visit a property without coming into contact with any other person and they made decisions to minimise the risk of this happening such as confining their activities to the lower floors as people slept above. However, two respondents reported taking much greater risks whilst breaking into houses which substantially increased the likelihood of contact with others, and perhaps violence. Almost universally, respondents liked working alone when carrying out burglaries. This, they suggested, minimised the risk of being caught and maximised the profits associated with crime:

Respondent: *'I don't work with anyone. Never. Never again.'*

Interviewer: *'What do you mean 'never again'?'*

Respondent: *'I did a couple of jobs with a guy, a long time back. It got me caught. I mean you can't rat on yourself, can you? And that matters. You can make more on your own. No need to split things'*

For all but two of the respondents, the desire to work alone was underpinned by the rationale outlined above. These nominals had histories of more serious offences including aggravated vehicle taking and robbery and they described having riskier M.O.'s for burglary. This meant that they tended to work in pairs or in a small group, so that they were capable of physically overcoming victims in the event of conflict.

Respondent: *'Me and the boys would do jobs together, so that you have back-up and you need that if things go tits up. People do stupid things and you can't get stuck...get caught up in that sh*t, man. You need to be out. We'd do, did a load of jobs for keys and watches and stuff and that was bolshy stuff, needed to be ready for stuff on those ones.'*

Interviewer: *'What do you mean? Ready for what?'*

Respondent: *'For people coming at you. Taking the p*ss. Trying to keep you there, take stuff back...whatever...any of that stuff.'*

Interviewer: *'So how did you prepare for that? What did you do differently?'*

Respondent: *'Well like I said before, didn't I? You work with people... I mean we'd make sure...you can't get tied up in that... some of the lads want to be tooled... go with something...The best way to go is in and out. You get that? Get the keys, get the jewellery, the cash*

and out. You get that: get the keys, get the jewellery, the cash, whatever. That's what you want. But if there was a guy about, if they wake up or whatever, then things get tricky. Some of the boys would take stuff to put them down but me... if you get caught... that ain't worth it. You have to be clever. Be smart about it. Working with people was a big part but you can use stuff, things that's there.'

Interviewer: 'What do you mean by that?'

Respondent: 'All I'm saying is that if you use things in the house, that's about, you ain't gonna be in as much of a mess if you wind up getting caught, yeah? There's always things about. A tool, furniture, a kettle, yeah?'

Even among these respondents, incidents of conflict with victims were not a regular occurrence and when they happened, the threat of violence was generally understood to be sufficient to allow offenders to leave the site of the offence. Nevertheless, some acts of violence were reported and these were generally accepted as being an intrinsic and necessary part of high-reward acquisitive crimes.

Respondent: 'I mean you probably think it is bad, like I am bad for saying or whatever, but it is just the way it is. You probably don't get that 'cos it's not your world but it was needed, necessary I mean. If people have that sh*t, they are going to want to protect it. You would, wouldn't you? And I was only doing what it took. When you move into that... When you move into going after better stuff, get a bit more ambitious... Well basically, you can't without being willing to go a bit further. This wasn't DVD's and stuff, yeah? It was serious.'

During interviews, respondents were asked about their selection process for properties to burgle. Many of the respondents with heavy drug habits detailed a fairly chaotic process which lacked any

meaningful process of planning:

Respondent: *'I dunno really. Just if you saw somewhere, like. A window open is good. Just jump in and have a look about. Get what you can.'*

These offenders did not engage in any meaningful scoping activities and didn't appear to devote much thought to the features of properties that might reduce the risk of them being caught. This was evidenced by the number of times they had been arrested and convicted for their involvement in burglary. They suggested that this related to the fact that they often offended whilst under the influence of drugs and this significantly affected their judgement.

Respondent: *'You don't think clearly about things, man. You don't think people can see you. Think you can get away with stuff. Take stupid risks. Drugs do that, yeah?'*

Others, were more reflective about their approach to burglary and were able to offer insight into their selection of targets and M.O's:

Interviewer: *'If you were going to hit a house then, what kind of equipment would you take? Is there anything you would take to like overcome security or anything?'*

Respondent: *'I'd have like a little jimmy bar for the window or screwdriver.'*

Interviewer: *'Right. And is there any kind of house that would make it or any kind of features of a house that would make it easier to get into that another. Like is there anything that you're looking for?'*

Interviewer: *'Wooden windows easy to open '*

...viewer. Wooden windows, easy to open...

The preference for houses with wooden windows was a recurring theme in the data. Below, one respondent details his approach to breaking into houses with wooden sash windows:

Respondent: *'My M.O. was I'd obviously walk down the street, normally if it was daytime, I'd always look for a big bush in the front garden to obviously cover the front window, cover the door. I'd make sure there was no view, any views from across the road that anyone could see me at that window or at that door. I'd probably tend to look for a basement as well, so I could drop down the stairs off the street level and my M.O. generally was sash windows... They were so simple to do. Just basically get a screwdriver, pop it into the centre of the sash window, push up, it would pop the little screw thing you tighten the window up, that would pop off straightaway. My thing was I'd do it – obviously check out the area first, make sure you've got a... it would have to be perfect for me. It would have to have a bush in the front garden, normally your lower street level. If it wasn't, I'd make sure no one could view from anywhere so that when my back turned that I could see if anyone's watching me. It was always from the front main entrance, really. Pop the sash window. Normally once I'd done that, because I didn't know if anyone was definitely in or not, I'd normally knocked the door prior to that and in ask a random question, asked for a random person, or random street. Once I'd popped the window, I'd walk away, then sit up somewhere, watch for about twenty minutes to make sure no one's seen what I've done, no one's come out and checked the noise, or anything. Then I'd obviously go back twenty minutes later and enter the property and take whatever I needed to take.'*

The account offered above evidences a much more methodical approach to burglary which sought to minimise risk by establishing an understanding of the property and its inhabitants in advance. This

understanding of the property and its inhabitants in advance. This was fairly common among the respondents. The two respondents below describe how they would spend time assessing properties and building lists of potential targets:

Respondent: *'Yeah. I mean, during the course of the day when I was using and stuff, obviously you walked around, you'd go different places, you weren't at it all the time, obviously, you'd be... but during my course of the day, I'd be making mental notes of where anything was, where... you know, "Okay, that's a goer, that's a goer, that's a goer," and they would be sort of built up in my head of where I could possibly go.'*

Respondent: *'I was always on the look-out for places. Places where people come and go, yeah? Where they's always mixing it up, easier to blend in. Not the places with those camera doorbells. Places where you ain't gonna be seen. With a bit of cover. Trees are good.'*

Two of the other respondents suggested that information from third parties played a role in their selection of burglary targets. In the first example, one man explained how information was passed to him by a local drug dealer which made him aware of the presence of desirable items in particular properties:

Respondent: *'He'd give us a little tip off, yeah. A little wink... Let us know who had what. If there was any watches kicking 'round that we should knowing about. He'd see if people had things we'd be interested in, see... turning up with all sorts, they'd be... I mean he'd get a kick back, a little sweetner for his efforts, yeah?'*

In the second, the respondent suggested that information from members of the local Asian community allowed him to identify where people would be celebrating weddings and who could therefore be

targeted for gold burglaries:

Interviewer: *'If we think about maybe burglary in the first instance, how would you say that you choose targets for burglary?'*

Respondent: *'Sometimes I used to get information like off the Asians, yeah...The P*kis would phone me, and say there's a wedding or something, yeah, so they've actually informed me when they're [out], so all of the jewellery and that, is at the house. Then I'd go and do it, and then obviously I'd give them a little drink out of... like, I'd look after them moneywise. But to them it's worth a lot of money.'*

Interviewer: *'Right, and how do you get to know those people, then?'*

Respondent: *'I just grew up, we all grew up on the same estate. I buy drugs from them. A lot of it is drug involvement... I've done a few of them [gold burglaries].'*

Interviewer: *'The gold burglaries that you've done, were they fairly local to yourself?'*

Respondent: *'Yeah, on my doorstep, basically.'*

The respondents were also asked about repeat victimisation of properties for burglaries, but this was not something in which they engaged. Whilst there were a few isolated incidents of people returning to properties, these related to unique circumstances and were not indicative of a particular M.O. Some of the drug users suggested that this simply would not have occurred to them to do so:

Respondent: *'See you don't think about things, don't make clever plans. You just hit whatever you can when you need drugs. Simple. I never went back nowhere. Never went back for nothin.'*

Others suggested that they purposefully did not return to properties as they perceived this to be risky. They anticipated that people would be more vigilant and might have adopted more stringent security procedures following their victimisation.

Interviewer: *'What about in terms of repeat victimisation? ...if you do a house, would you go back and do it again or not?'*

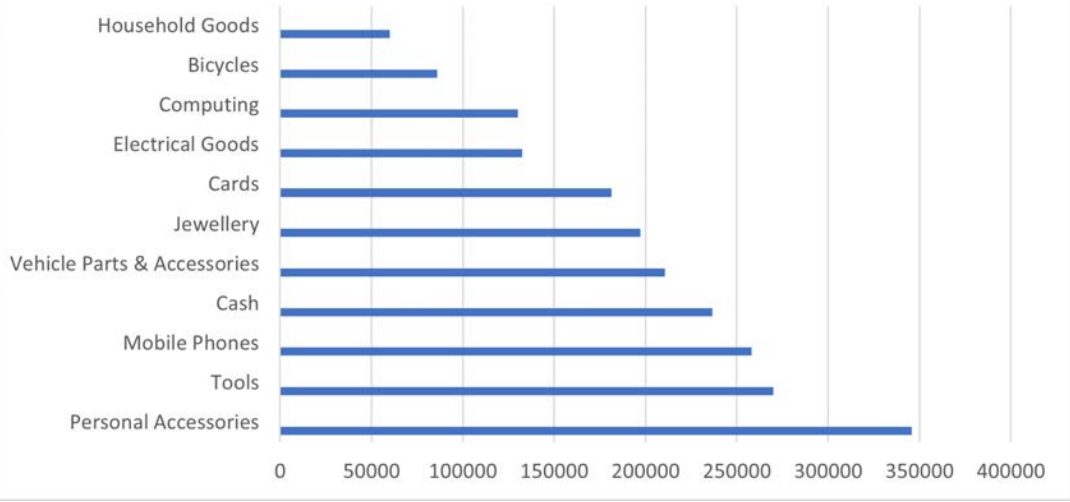
Respondent: *'For me, I've never done that I don't think... Yeah, I just, I just feel like you've done it, and normally you'd think they're going to be a bit more on point now that it has been happened, so I've instantly got that fear factor of I've done something, they're going to be a bit more wary now, they're going to be a bit more aware, basically got a bit more security. I'd normally walk past properties a few weeks later and notice they've got an alarm bell up now, or they've got different security measures on the windows, or they've got a doorbell cam, or something like that. You'd notice little things, and you think, right you just give that a wide berth so yeah, for me it was just, I think it's just a risk I didn't want to take.'*



Commodities Associated with Neighbourhood Acquisitive Crimes

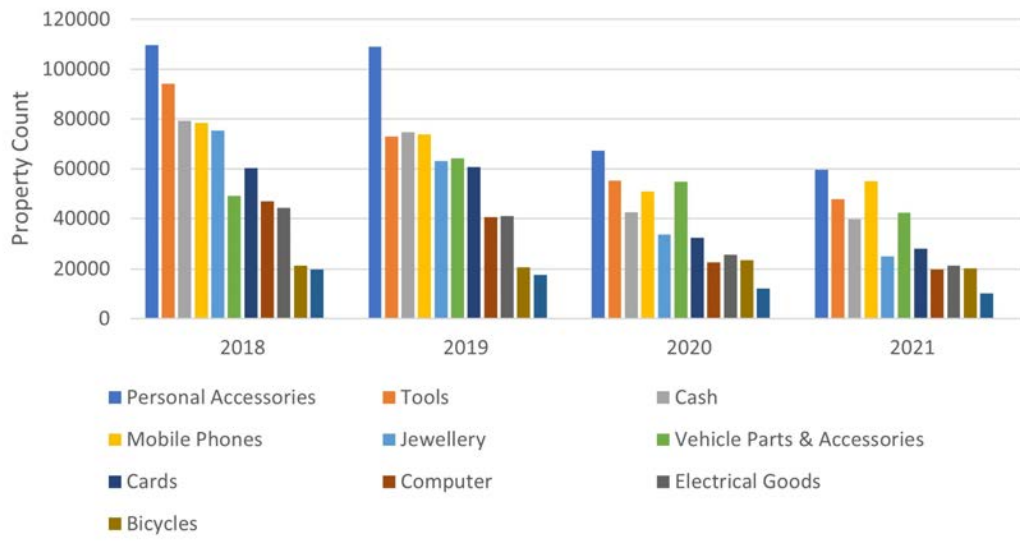
Across the four-year period under consideration, police data demonstrates that the top ten most frequently stolen property categories were: personal accessories; tools; mobile phones; cash; vehicle parts and accessories; jewellery; cards; electrical goods; computing items; and bicycles. Household goods and accessories was eleventh and has been included here on the basis that there is no stolen goods market associated with cash. The graph below shows the number of these items reported to the research as stolen across the entire four-year period, for all offence types.

Most Frequently Stolen Items (total four-year period, all offence types)



Reflecting fluctuations in crime rates between 2018 and 2021, a greater proportion of stolen items reported to the research are concentrated in the years 2018 and 2019. When considered by year, the data demonstrates that personal accessories were the most frequently stolen item for all years 2018-2021. Similarly, across all four years, household items made up the smallest proportion of the top ten stolen item categories. Most of the remaining nine property categories remained fairly stable in the proportion of total stolen items that they represented each year. There were two main exceptions to this trend. The first was mobile phones which increased from 12.4% of the top ten stolen items in 2018 to 16.8% in 2021. The second was jewellery which reduced from 12% to 7% of the top ten most stolen items between 2018 and 2021.

Total number of reported stolen goods (police data)

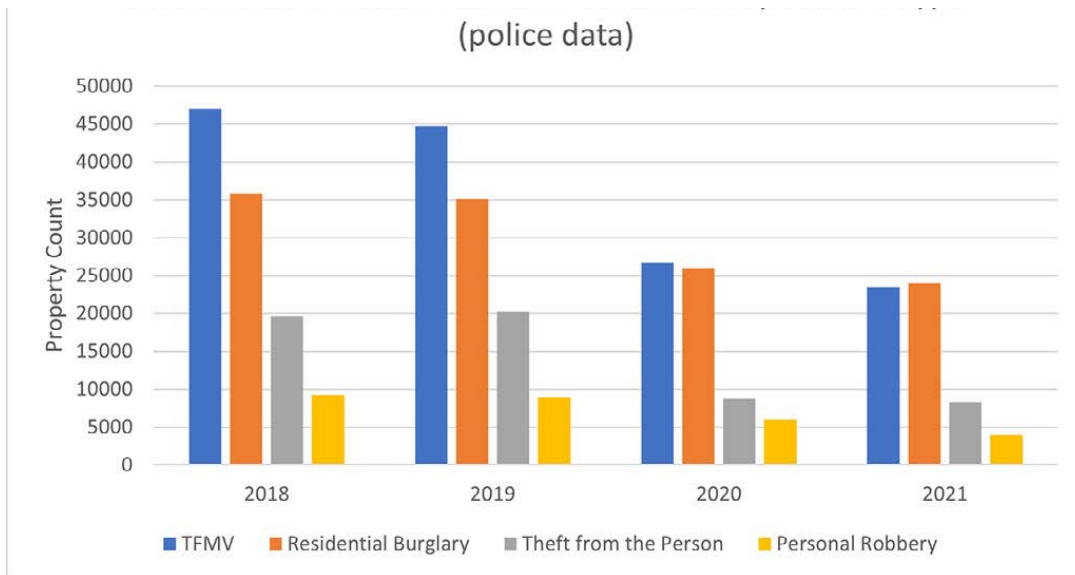




Personal Accessories, Cash and Cards

Personal Accessories:

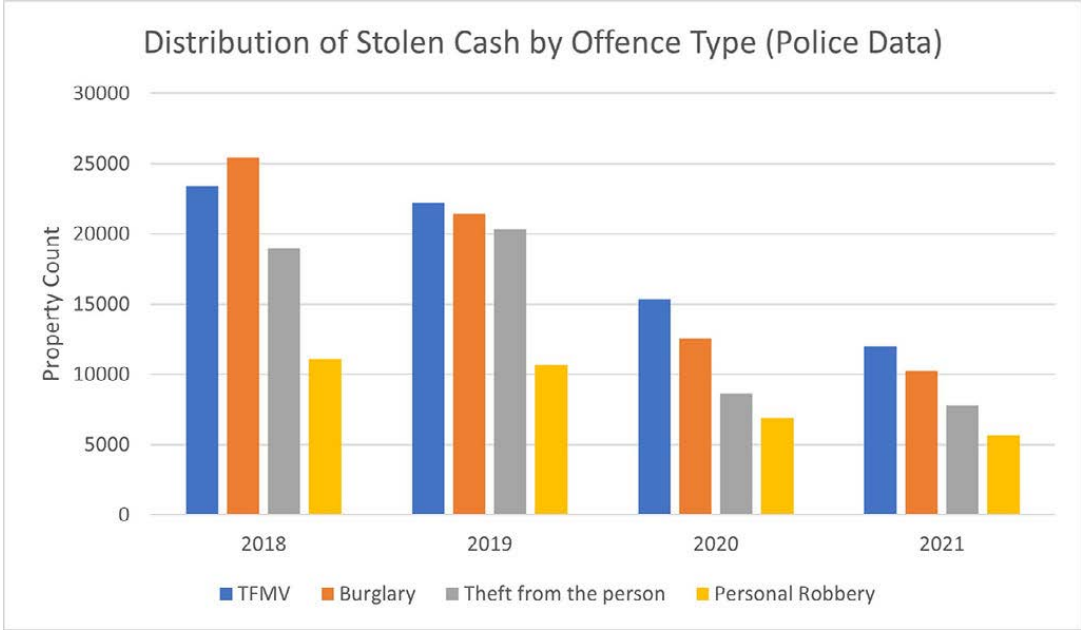
As outlined above, 'personal accessories' were most frequently recorded as stolen in the research data. For the four-year period under consideration, a total of 345,789 stolen personal accessories were recorded by the project. This category comprised of items such as bags, briefcases, wallets, purses, glasses and sunglasses and these items remained the most regularly targeted items across all four years of the period of study. In the data provided to the study, the largest number of stolen personal accessories were recorded against theft from motor vehicle offences, constituting 41% of total stolen personal accessories. After TFMV offences, burglary was the second offence type most likely to be associated with the theft of personal accessories, with the 35% of the total number of stolen personal accessories reported to the project being recorded against this offence type. Finally, 16% of all stolen personal accessories were associated with theft from the person offences and 8% were attributable to personal robbery. Over time, the distribution of stolen personal accessories across offence types remains largely stable with the exception that the numbers attributable to TFMV and burglary becomes more equal over time. Thus, in 2018, 43% of all stolen personal accessories were recorded against TFMV offences and 33% against residential burglaries. By 2021, this difference had reduced significantly with 40% of stolen personal accessories being attributable to burglary offences being associated and 39% with TFMV.



Cash:

In the research data, cash was the fourth most frequently stolen

commodity and was targeted across all neighbourhood acquisitive offence types. Of the cash thefts reported to the project across the four-year period, 31.4% related to thefts from vehicles, 29.9% were attributable to domestic burglaries, 24% related to thefts from the person with robbery constituting 14.7%. The frequency with which cash was recorded as stolen declines steadily across the four-year period, reflecting wider trends in crime rates.

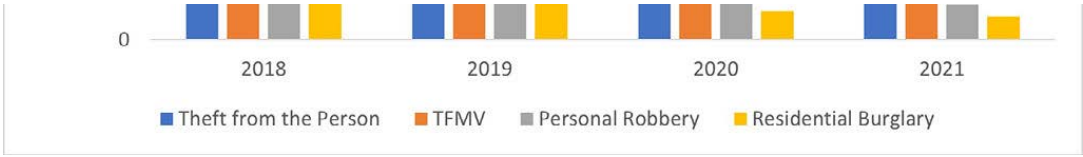


Bank Cards:

Research findings indicated that bank cards were the seventh most frequently stolen property category. When considered in aggregate, the data for the years 2018-2021 indicated that the theft of bank cards was most likely to take place in theft from the person offences.

However, when annual offence data was considered on an individual basis, the dominance of theft from the person offences in stolen bank card data reduced over time due to an increased proportion of stolen bank cards being associated with thefts from motor vehicles. Thus, when all data for the entire research period is considered, 45.2% of all bank cards reported to the research were stolen in theft from the person offences, 35.7% related to thefts from motor vehicles, 12.5% were taken in personal robberies with 7.5% being attributable to residential burglaries. When considering the data from 2018 and 2021, the percentage of stolen cards attributable to thefts from the person reduced by 5.6% from 46.5% to 40.9%, whilst the figure for thefts from the vehicle rose from 32.9% to 39.7%.





Personal Accessories, Cash and Cards: Offender Perspectives

Given that across all offence types, the realisation of financial returns from stolen commodities drove engagement in acquisitive crime, it comes as no surprise that cash was universally described as being the most desirable target for respondents. Stealing money allowed thieves to generate profits without the effort and risks associated with selling stolen goods. For this reason, the theft of cash drove a significant number of offences and seemed to be particularly appealing to those who sought to generate money to fund drug habits. Consequently, every single respondent in the research stated that cash would always be their priority in any offence and interviewees suggested that the dominance of personal accessories in stolen property data may be attributable to offenders' desire to steal money. For the respondents, cash had the added advantage of being untraceable and therefore very unlikely to lead to their incrimination. During interview, respondents repeatedly suggested that wallets, handbags and rucksacks would be stolen in the belief that they contained money, but that they had no intrinsic value in themselves, often being disposed of immediately after the event. The frequency with which this was stated indicates the possibility that the primacy of personal accessories in stolen property data may be somewhat misleading. This was true across all four offence categories which involved the theft of property. Discussing his involvement in burglary, one interviewee said:

Respondent: *'It would be the night-time jobs when you'd get the bags and the wallets, cos that's when people were in. So that meant it was messy... You had to be fast. You would always want a wallet for the money and some jobs you have time to look through it... to get*

the cash... not very much because people are about and you need to get out...so you just grab a bag and go and deal with it later, sometimes you can find the purse or whatever but ... like I say it was messy at night and you'd just dump the bag wherever and keep the money... whatever there was like.'

Similar decision-making processes were reported by those involved in TFMV offences. Perpetrators described balancing the need to obtain goods and leave the site of the vehicle in the shortest time possible, with the desire to dispose of incriminating goods as quickly as possible. This meant that they might search a bag quickly for a purse or a wallet but wait to remove money or cards once they had moved away from the vehicle. The accounts offered by two respondents below provide examples:

Respondent: *'Not when you are on gear, mind. Gear makes you... well you don't care. You think you are [inaudible]... you think you are f*cking Superman... but when you think straight, you don't want to hang round, you want to be away. Get the wallet and off... worry about the money well, down... off ... you look about that later.'*

Respondent: *'I just stuck the bags in the bin, a bush, like, a... you know, like a...you know those big bins at shops? Something like that. I don't want that [the bag]. I don't want to have that with me. So, I take whatever is in it. A bag, it'd be money, cards, maybe something like shades but not really, money probably, a wallet, you know.'*

Very few of those who participated in the research admitted having involvement in robbery offences. The veracity of their claims could not be verified but there appeared to be some stigma associated with admitting this offence among respondents and this may explain the low rates of robbery that were reported during interviews. The

nine respondents who did declare their involvement in robbery all suggested that obtaining cash would be their priority in any offence. During robberies, wallets, bags and cash were always the primary targets as they were described as providing the best returns but were also the quickest to obtain. Again, bags and wallets tended to be quickly disposed of once the cash they contained had been removed. Thus, while the theft of cash is not associated with any form of stolen goods market, it appears that it is a driver of a significant number of neighbourhood acquisitive crimes and moreover, the theft of cash also appears to account for the dominance of personal accessories in police stolen property data.

The only exception to this rule appeared to relate to earphones. In police data, earphones were classified under both personal accessories and electrical equipment. Earphones, and in particular Apple Bluetooth earphones, were deemed to be an extremely desirable commodity in TFMV, TPTP and burglary offences. Their resale value and portability were something that was understood to make them a current 'hot product' and respondents reported always being able to sell these on through local informal direct sales or to local 'tech kiosks' with whom they did business.

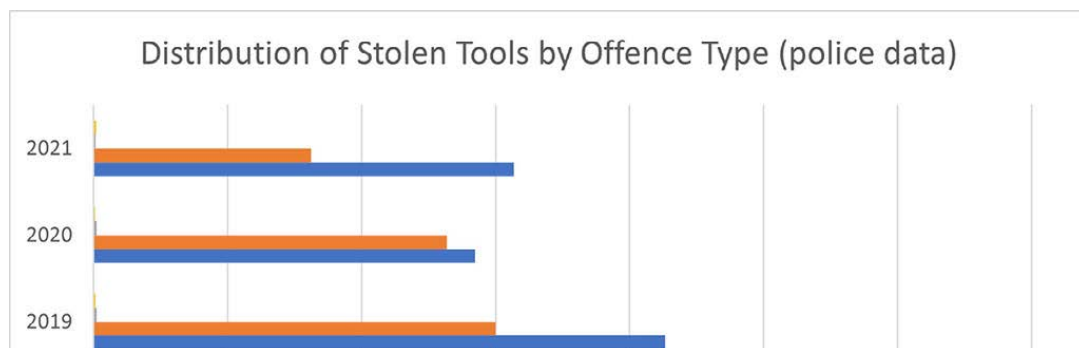


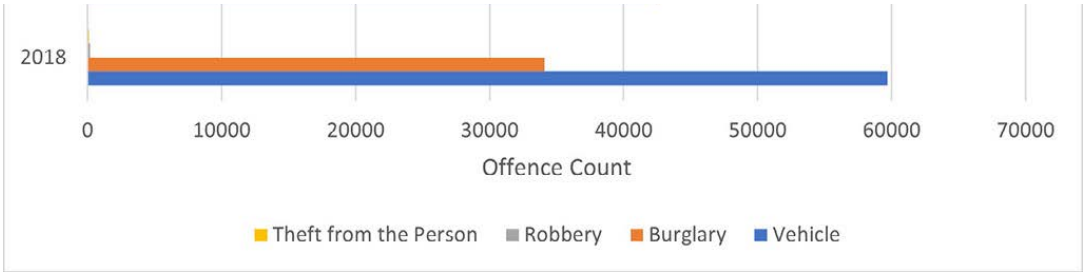
Tools and Machinery



Findings:

Across the five major neighbourhood acquisitive crime types, the property category of tools and machinery was the second most frequently stolen. Reflecting overall changes in crime rates, the number of tools reported stolen to the research reduced gradually over the four-year period. By a significant margin, tools were most frequently stolen in TFMV offences (60%), followed by residential burglary (39%) with only a tiny proportion being taken in theft from the person and personal robbery offences (less than 1% each). When comparing data between 2018 and 2021, the distribution of tool thefts across offence type remained fairly stable with TFMV offences accounting for 63.4% of all stolen tools in 2018 and 65% in 2021. Data obtained from the insurance industry also demonstrates the prominence of tools in both TFMV and burglary claims data. Reflecting trends in police data, insurers saw the absolute number of claims for tools decline over time and the cost of claims also declined very slightly during this period. However, tools remained a significant proportion of the property types against which claims were made for the entire four-year period. In some insurance data it is possible to separate TFMV claims for cars from those affecting vans, and this demonstrates the extent to which vans are targeted specifically for tools. For one insurance provider, for example, the proportion of TFMV claims relating to tools increased from 26.67% in 2018 to 85.71% in 2021.





Tools and Machinery: Offender Perspectives

All but four of the offenders interviewed in the research had experience of stealing tools and machinery in either TFMV or burglary offences. All of those who had taken tools from vehicles described them as being highly desirable commodities which almost always tended to be specifically targeted in advance. Offenders belonging to this group tended to target vans in the knowledge that they were likely to contain tools and went equipped with both tools for their liberation and means for their onward transportation. The appeal of tools, for these respondents, related to the consistency of their market demand as they were always able to realise profits from them. Not only were tools consistently saleable, they also tended to generate what offenders deemed to be 'fair prices', meaning that they were usually able to achieve market value in their subsequent sale of goods. This was something which distinguished tools from other commodities for those involved in TFMV offences. On this subject, one interviewee said:

Respondent: *'You want to go for tools, man. Tools are always good for money. We did vans for a long time, bruh.'*

Interviewer: *'Why was that?'*

Respondent: *'You could never not sell that stuff. Someone always wanted it. We was selling it everywhere. We couldn't get enough.'*

Interviewer: *'Was that unusual?'*

Respondent: *'Not unusual for [tools], they always wanted that stuff. But other stuff, you can get stuck with, if you know what I'm saying.'*

Interviewer: *'So, are tools a good money-maker? How much do you get for them?'*

Respondent: *'Yeah, man. People pay good money for tools. They need that sh*t, so they's willing to pay for it, do you get me? You don't get ripped off for tools like you do with other stuff.'*

Interviewer: *'Why not? Why are tools different to what we discussed before?'*

Respondent: *''cus you don't have to deal with those people from those f*cking shops that are always having your life, trying to knock you down... trying to say we can't take this 'cus it ain't legit, 'cus it's got this, it's got that... no-one wants 'em... you know? You don't bother with that stuff, man.'*

Interviewer: *'Okay, great. So, if you don't take them to those places, what will you do with tools once you've stolen them, then?'*

Respondent: *'Sell 'em. Straight off. Sell 'em.'*

Interviewer: *'Where?'*

Respondent: *'Other builders. They always want them. They are bad for that. They don't give a f*ck where they come from. They would never ask that. Never ask no questions.'*

Interviewer: *'So where do you find these builders to sell to?'*

Respondent: *'Online, in the pub, round our way, anywhere, people always buy 'em and they buy 'em at a fair price, none of this rip-off sh*t, man... oh my days...you get proper prices for 'em.'*

The account of the disposal routes associated with tools from TFMV offences offered above was fairly representative of those interviewed. The vast majority of people interviewed had experience of selling tools via local informal networks and reported that those working in the construction industry made up the vast majority of their customer base. Some sold in local pubs, via acquaintances, or sometimes in local car boot sales and markets. All accounts of these informal sales networks detailed the way in which local tradespeople provided a constant source of demand for their stolen tools.

Furthermore, a significant proportion of those stealing tools in TFMV offences used online sales platforms to move equipment, citing a range of different outlets in their accounts. Again, when selling tools online, the respondents suggested that tradespeople constituted the vast majority, if not all, of their custom. They also suggested they often created seller profiles which inferred that they too were tradespeople, but many said that this was often not necessary as buyers were fundamentally unconcerned with this level of detail. In their accounts of selling tools online, respondents most frequently cited using Facebook Marketplace and Gumtree to list goods. There appeared to be a common belief that there were less stringent requirements when listing items and that the platforms allowed local markets to be served with relative ease. The fact that fees were not incurred for selling items was also considered desirable to respondents. Others used Ebay to advertise their goods and suggested that this was often preferable when selling tools with distinguishing features as those buying the goods tended to be more geographically dispersed. Cash on collection was preferred by all respondents as a means of payment but postal services were also

routinely offered for goods.

Those involved in tool thefts from vehicles tended to be significantly more organised and successful than those who stole tools in burglary offences. The respondents involved in the theft of tools from vehicles tended to be fairly skilled and knowledgeable. These types of tool thefts tended to form an established pattern of criminal behaviour that was both planned and replicated on a regular basis. Those involved regularly sold tools in significant quantities, were knowledgeable about their value and were at ease using online sales platforms. Selling tools, for this group of offenders, was approached as a business. Mirroring transformations in contemporary drug markets, the interaction with online sales environments for those selling stolen tools has meant that part of their criminal practice has become transformed by the dictates of capitalist enterprise as they become concerned with issues such as offering good customer service and obtaining positive buyer reviews.

Respondent: *'People always want to buy tools and we always had them. We got [laughs] reviews. Good ones. And it sounds funny now, but it was important, you see. I mean we were selling a lot. So we ended up using a few accounts, but we could always shift them. People would turn up and full-on conversations about work [laughs] and we would be like 'yeah, yeah, yeah, I know', or they would ask loads of questions about them and using them on messages. They just thought you did the same, I guess. So we ran with it and people loved it... Would say we were top-fellas on the feedback.'*

Among those who reported involvement in TFMV offences there were a smaller number whose criminality tended to be more chaotic and highly opportunistic, and these offenders tended to be less sophisticated. They tended to carry out impulsive 'smash and grab'

thefts. Inevitably these thefts were less likely to generate significant sums of money as they often relied on offenders carrying items away from the crime location. For this second subset of TFMV offenders, tools tended to be sold to local handlers to generate money for drugs, or in some cases were able to be exchanged directly for drugs. The desperation of these offenders to realise profit from the tools they stole inevitably meant that the amount they were paid for tools was often significantly under market value. To a certain extent, this tended to be mirrored among respondents engaged in burglary offences to steal tools. As mentioned above, among the burglars who participated in the study, there appeared to be two groups: the more successful burglars who made calculated assessments about targets, who focused on the theft of cash, jewellery and car keys, and those more erratic nominals who would steal anything. The latter group tended to share characteristics with the smash and grab TFMV offenders insofar as they often had significant drug habits and were drawn from backgrounds of significant deprivation. Thus, the experience of selling tools for this group was very different to that of the more organised and business-like TFMV tool thieves. They tended to rely heavily on the presence of local fences and drug dealers who often offered exploitative amounts for goods. Discussing this issue, one respondent said:

Respondent: *'Aye, I took tools. A canny few, really.'*

Interviewer: *'Were they easy to sell?'*

Respondent: *'Aye... well nah. Well both really. They'd take them, but they'd take the p*ss.'*

Interviewer: *'What do you mean?'*

Respondent: *'The money that they'd give you, I mean, it took the p*ss. They knew the' could, so they did.'*

Interviewer: *'So what are we talking here? How much would you get if you took...say, I dunno... a drill?'*

Respondent: *'A drill? I dunno. They would always have a laugh... they'd say... 'ah nah. I'm not havin' that. No way. I've already got loads of them', or 'No one wants them these days. I can't sell them', all just so they could rip the p*ss out of you. And you can't say nowt 'cos you need the money. So you'd end up taking twenty for a drill that is worth loads... See I had this f*ckin' massive Stihl saw. You know? Aye? Massive thing. I took it round [Dave's] house. He absolutely did me over then. Do you know how much those things are worth?'*

Interviewer: *'Errr... I don't know. I guess it is hundreds?'*

Respondent: *'Exactly. Hundreds. Five at least. Five. Fifty quid. Fifty quid. He gave 'us fifty quid for a Stihl saw. Fifty.'*

Interviewer: *'If you thought it was that cheap, why did you take it?'*

Respondent: *'[laughs] Drugs, man. So I could get me drugs. I didn't care, I just wanted rid of it. He went on about it being hard to shift, said I was taking the p*ss by taking stuff that had a name on it... I mean I'd scrubbed at that already, he was just... he knew he could... they know...if you use, they can give you what they want. It's just the way it is.'*

In the interview excerpt above, respondent one alludes to the fact

that the presence of marking pen on the Stihl saw offered the handler with whom he did business the opportunity to offer him a derisory price. This issue was raised numerous times in interviews as respondents often suggested that local handlers often used marking on tools as the rationale to reduce the prices they offered to thieves. As a result, a number of respondents detailed the way in which they would try to scrub identifying features from tools before attempting to sell them with varying degrees of success. The use of marking pens to identify tools appeared to present much less of an issue for those selling tools online as they tended to advertise tools with identifying features hidden from view, but they suggested that ultimately, buyers were unconcerned by the presence of names or markings on tools. Summarising this position, one of the men said:

Respondent: *'Sure, some of them [tools] were marked up... had people's names on.. that kind of thing.'*

Interviewer: *'And did that bother you? Could you still sell them? Did you have to try and remove the markings?'*

Respondent: *'People put their name on things. That's what they do, don't they? I mean sometimes we'd try... but those pens ain't meant to come off and no one is bothered. No one is gonna ask about the name when they buy it, are they? They just buy it and don't ask. I wasn't gonna waste time tryin'... you know. You just wouldn't put it up there in everyone's faces in the advert.'*

Interviewer: *'So names on tools didn't cause an issue?'*

Respondent: *'Nah, man. They were trade, buying. So, they probably did too [put their name on their tools]. It's normal.'*

Throughout the research, it was evident that significant links exist between the theft of tools and the construction industry. Not only are tradespeople regularly targeted by thieves, but they also appear to drive the demand for stolen goods by a significant degree. The location of the trade for stolen tools within the construction industry also appears to offer practical benefits which serve to facilitate and sustain the profitability of this form of criminal enterprise. In the first instance, it ensures that a constant demand for stolen goods exists, as tradespeople buy stolen tools through informal networks, at local sales and online. In the second, the ostensible churn of tools within this industry offers offenders credibility when selling tools as they are able to claim also to be tradespeople and this allows them to sell items in larger volumes without attracting attention.

Interviewer: *'Do you sell tools individually or several at the same time when selling them online?'*

Respondent: *'That's the thing about online, you can sell 'em all at once. With shops people are going to ask questions if you turn up with them. Online, no one knows, you can be upgrading to battery, moving to another brand, moving to another job, anything, you know. You can list them on different shops, mix it up a bit, between different people, anything but sometimes it's okay to have a good few for sale because there's reasons for it, like. Not crime, not burglary jobs, not vans, reasons. Real ones. Like people do.'*

Interviewer: *'So would you include those reasons in your advert?'*

Respondent: *'Yeah, sometimes. Sometimes we would something like 'moving to another brand or whatever, or giving up on trade something, but really you don't need to, not really. People just don't*

care.



Industry Perspectives:

The research project secured participation from a broad range of stakeholders in the problem of tool theft. Participants were drawn from various areas of the tool industry including manufacturers, merchants, those offering marking and security services and broader forums and interest groups. The research was timely in the sense that recent conversations about increases in tool theft and possible legislative reform within this market, meant that tool theft was very much at the forefront of discussions within this industry. Throughout these conversations, the issues of marking, registration and insurance repeatedly came to the fore as being of central importance. Police officers sought to highlight the problem, discussing the frequency with which recovered tools could not be returned to their owners because they lacked identification marking, nor was their ownership registered.

At present, several mechanisms for the marking and registration of tools exist, though they vary greatly in nature. In the first instance, several manufacturers offer extended warranties if a product is registered. In these schemes, the standard warranty can be extended by a period if a customer enters their details on the company's website but throughout interviews, take up for these schemes was universally understood to be very low, usually under 10% of sales. A market-leading example within the tool industry can be found in Festool's 'Warranty All-Inclusive' which requires customers to register their product within 90 days of purchase and in return for three years parts guarantee, replacement in the event of theft and full repair service. Unfortunately, the research has not been able to interview a Festool representative to explore the current rates of participation among Festool customers, but this remains worthy of further investigation. A range of post-sale registration schemes also exist

which tool owners can elect to participate in, some of which involve a nominal fee, while others offer free registration options.

Representatives from these companies were very keen to communicate the importance of creating a repository of information on tool ownership but were also very open about the fact that their model was unlikely to prove successful in doing so, given the very low levels of participation in their products and services. They were all too aware of the problems in motivating tradespeople to register their goods. All such companies that participated in the research had very low numbers of registrations, sometimes with numbers totalling around numbers as low as two hundred.

Among those involved in the sale of tools, there was substantial appetite to find solutions to the issues they faced in relation to theft in transit, employee theft and theft from stores. As retailers, there was an awareness that many of the measures which may be implemented to tackle neighbourhood tool theft may also be valuable in assisting with criminality in the commercial sector. There was, therefore, significant interest in forensic marking in the tool sector in order that stock might be traced more effectively throughout the supply chain. Some retailers reporting having attempted to secure greater support from product manufacturers in addressing theft. However, there was a perception that some manufacturers were reluctant to assist in addressing thefts, citing a belief that it lay beyond their sphere of responsibility. During interviews with product manufacturers, some drew attention to the possibility that thefts may be a positive force within particular areas of the sector, such as in the hire industry where thefts allowed stock to be replaced on a regular basis and among those with insurance who may also wish to replace their equipment with newer models. There was also some recognition of the fact that thefts inevitably drove tool sales as those affected replaced what they had lost. In these conversations, the details of insurance policies were identified as significant barriers to making positive change

within the sector as there was a commonly held perception that insurance companies failed to incentivise good security practices.

Discussions around the implementation of industry-wide marking and registration schemes were extensive and, whilst the commercial implications of potential reforms appeared to generate areas of disagreement among respondents, there was widespread agreement around the need for registration at the point of sale, and for marking processes to precede this, most likely at the point of manufacture. Several competing commercial interests serve to complicate discussions in this area and the need for measures to be sensitive to the requirements and capabilities of technology used throughout the sector is very real. Inevitably, those within the tool industry who will be charged with the implementation of change hold some of the most relevant and accurate information regarding the barriers to, and opportunities for, change and these must be central to discussions going forward. During the research, several industry representatives brought forward ideas of potential solutions to improving tool security, such as the incorporation of QR codes on products, but these must be brought to roundtable discussions so that their feasibility might be considered by all of those affected.

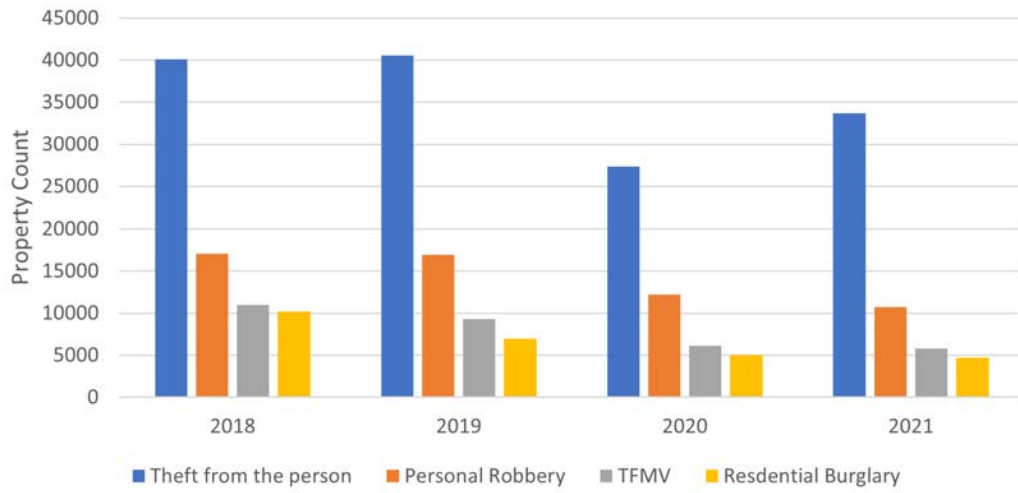


Mobile Phones

Findings:

During the period 2018-2021, mobile phones were the third most frequently stolen item across the five neighbourhood offence types. By a significant margin, the vast majority stolen mobile phones were recorded against theft from the person offences. For the entire period 2018-2021, theft from the person offences accounted for 55% of all stolen mobile phones reported to the research. After theft from the person, robbery was the second most closely associated offence with the theft of mobile phones, accounting for 22% of phones reported as stolen to the research in the four-year period. The proportion of mobile phones stolen in other offences was much smaller with 12.5% associated with TFMV offences and 10.5% relating to residential burglaries. Whilst the absolute number of phones recorded as stolen has fluctuated over time in line with wider changes in crime rate, the distribution of stolen phones by offence type has remained largely stable over time. Nevertheless, between 2018 and 2021, there was an increase from 51% to 61% in the proportion of mobile phones recorded as stolen in the research which were attributable to the theft from the person offences. Across the same period, the figure associated with personal robbery offences reduced very slightly from 22% to 19.5%.

Distribution of Stolen Mobile Phones by Offence Type
(police data)



Mobile Phones: Offender Perspectives

In the police data provided to the study, mobile phones were the commodity type most frequently reported as stolen in personal robbery and TFTP offences. Across all offence types, mobile phones ranked as the fourth most frequently stolen form of commodity. In short, they form a very significant proportion of all stolen property in neighbourhood acquisitive crimes. However, this was not reflected in the interview data collected with offenders. Whilst respondents had stolen significant numbers of mobile phones in the past, they felt that developments in technology now precluded many of them from doing so. Mobile phones were not something they felt confident in taking because they had neither the skills nor the contacts to make onward sales. There were three exceptions to this rule, but these respondents sold phones to local phone kiosks/ technology shops which were then subsequently broken down for parts. One respondent described his relationship with a local phone shop owner:

Respondent: *'Well, nowadays actually, I have... I do know a guy that will buy stolen phones because he'll use all the spares and repairs. You know, like if you break your iPhone 14 screen, to get that fixed, you're looking at good 250 quid, aren't you?... When I put... when, like say, the guy in the shop, he'll just use a stolen phone screen, because you can't unlock an iPhone, but if you've got a stolen iPhone 14, now yeah, you can't use it again, but you can use the battery and the charger port, you can sell it for parts.'*

Interviewer: *'Right, and what kind of person is that?'*

Respondent: *'This guy's got a shop. He started on the market, and now he's got a shop that sells every phone you can imagine, laptops. He fixes them, screen replacements. Because I used to break my screen on a weekly basis, and this is how I got to meet him. Then, I found an iPhone and in fact, it was only iPhone... I think it was a 13... is it a 14 now?'*

Interviewer: *'Oh, I've no idea. I'm totally out of touch.'*

Respondent: *'...so I turned it off, went in his shop, and went, "Yo, look, I just found this," and he goes, "Oh, it's worth nothing," and I went, "You lying b*stard," because I'm pretty clever like that. I'm like, "What, you telling me the screen's not worth £150 to you, and the battery's not worth £150 to you?" and he's got, had a little grin and I went, "Give us 50 quid and you can have it." To him that's 300 quid.'*

Interviewer: *'Right, so is that how much you would get for a phone, then, about 50 quid?'*

Respondent: *'Yeah, you wouldn't get a lot because they've got to do a bit of work to get their money.'*

This account was representative of the experiences of the three respondents who still stole phones. They all sold them to similar types of contacts in the belief that they would be broken down for spare parts. None of these respondents stole mobile phones in significant quantities. It seems therefore, that mobile phone theft and its attendant burgeoning second-hand market more closely relates to more organised criminality. Interviews with police forces and data obtained from local forces and ROCUs appear to corroborate this picture. Within this data numerous OCGs and Priority Individuals are

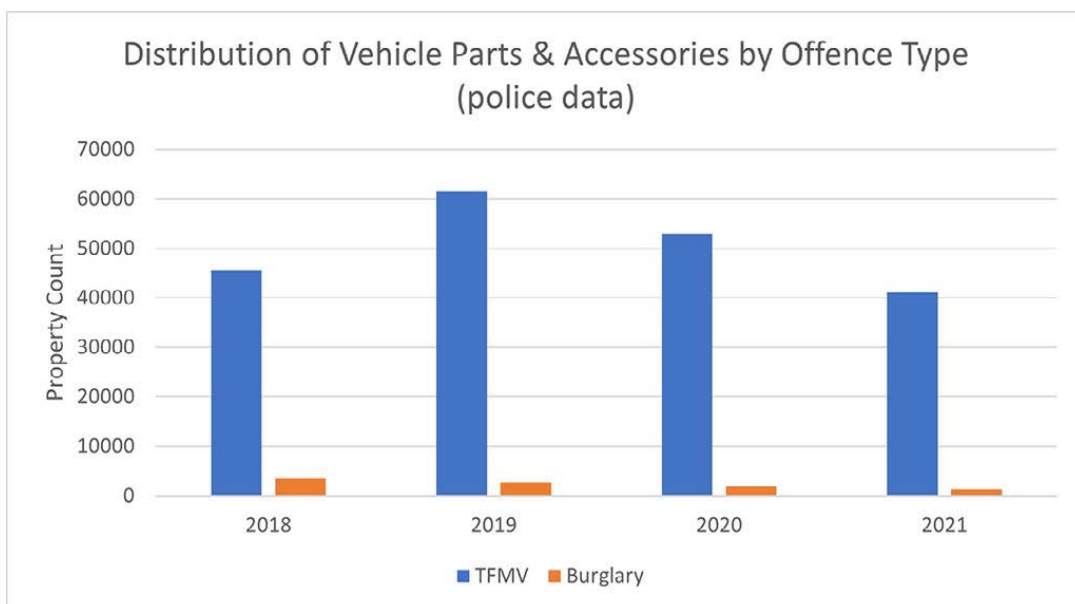
flagged for their involvement in organised robbery offences involving the theft of mobile phones. Increasing levels of security on mobile phones appears to have pushed mobile phone theft into the more organised end of the criminal spectrum. Several organised crime groups specialising in mobile phone robberies were identified in police data with several being known to operate across multiple force areas. In police interviews, GMP's Cheetham Hill was identified as receiving significant flows of stolen goods from across multiple force areas, including mobile phones from organised theft groups. Cheetham Hill is currently the focus of an extensive multi-agency operation to address the significant social and economic issues in the area, including GMP's Op Vulcan which seeks to intervene in the presence of extensive and well-established illicit trade networks in the locality. Inevitably, this means that these particular trading networks will disperse geographically and mapping the movement of these activities, in conjunction with efforts to map the presence of similar geographical hubs across other force areas, ought to form the basis of future research.



Vehicle Parts and Accessories

Findings:

Vehicle parts and accessories were the fifth most frequently stolen property type in the research. The vast majority of these stolen items related to theft from motor vehicle offences, but a small number were taken during burglary incidents. Of the total number of stolen vehicle parts and accessories reported the project, 95.6% were taken in thefts from the motor vehicle. The trajectory of the number of vehicle parts and accessories stolen over time is somewhat distinct from other property categories. Between 2018 and 2019, the number of stolen vehicle parts and accessories increased significantly, before reducing throughout 2020 and 2021. Within this fairly broad category, across the entire four-year period, the most frequently stolen property type was vehicle registration plates, followed by catalytic converters, vehicle parts, sat navs, and finally wheels or tyres. When annual data is considered, the number of catalytic converters recorded as stolen appears to increase across the period under consideration.



Offender Perspectives:

The numbers of interviewees self-reporting their involvement in the theft of vehicle parts and accessories was fairly limited. Many had stolen VRMs to use on stolen vehicles in the course of their offending. Many of the more chaotic drug users in the cohort described engaging in impulsive and opportunistic 'smash and grab' style TFMV offences to steal items such as satnavs which were subsequently sold to local handlers or in pawnshops. However, only one person reported their involvement in the theft of car components such as wheels or catalytic converters and the offences to which he referred were historic. The information that they were able to offer was therefore of limited value. Information from police data and interviews, however, indicates the presence of a very strong illicit market in the trade of car parts. This market is deeply embedded in

OCG networks operating both nationally and internationally, and often involving FNOs. The disposal routes for the car parts associated with these networks are heavily dependent on technology. The initial post-theft distribution of commodities is known to involve sales in closed social media platform chat groups (including Instagram, WhatsApp and Snap Chat), with sales taking place across a number of online sales platforms.

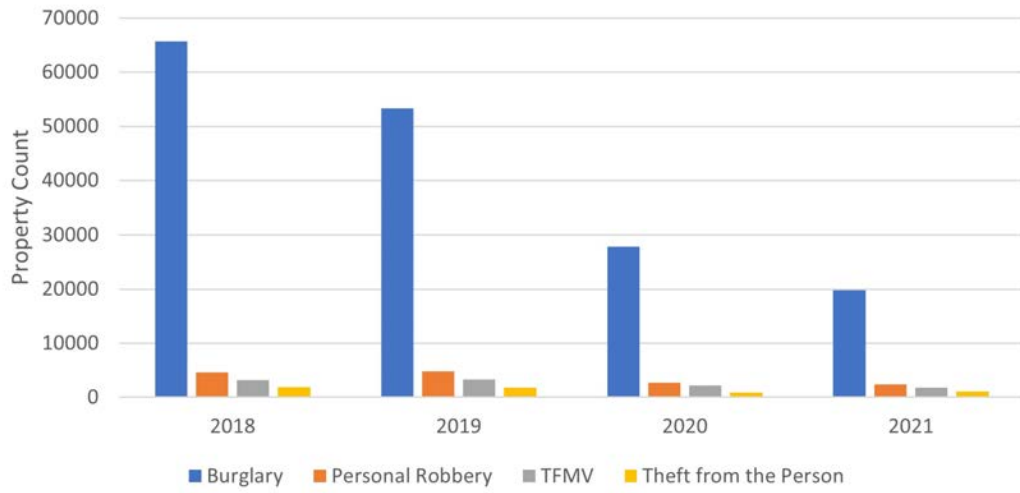


Jewellery

Findings:

The theft of jewellery is overwhelmingly an issue associated with residential burglaries. Across the entire four-year period, 84.5% of all pieces of jewellery recorded as stolen in the research were attributable to residential burglaries. Of the remaining pieces of jewellery in the research, 7.3% were stolen in personal robberies, 5.3% in thefts from vehicles and the remaining 2.9% were attributable to thefts from the person. Again, reflecting the declining crime rates during the period under consideration, and especially in relation to burglary, the number of pieces of jewellery stolen per year declines steadily and significantly over time. Throughout this entire period, the dominance of burglary offences in jewellery theft data remains unchanged with 80.3% of all stolen jewellery being associated with residential burglaries in 2018 and 79% in 2021.

Distribution of Stolen Jewellery by Offence Type (police data)



Jewellery: Offender Perspectives

Reflecting the findings from the first phase of the research, jewellery was by far the most desirable commodity for residential burglars in the study. Jewellery was valued on account of its high market-demand, the ease with which it could be hidden and transported, and the ease with which it could be sold. Such was the enthusiasm for jewellery that one respondent remarked:

Respondent: *'If I was to get back into it now, I would only steal jewellery.'*

Interviewer: *'Right. Why is that then? Can you explain that to me?'*

Respondent: *'It's high value... Yes. Any mother*cker will buy that sh*t.'*

More successful burglars described making very deliberate decisions about their target selection and these decisions were based on assessments of the potential returns they could make. For this subset of offenders, successfully executing a two-in-one Hanoi burglary whilst also taking jewellery was the ideal outcome.

Interviewer: *'Would you be able to talk me through what you would target in a burglary? What kind items would you go for?'*

Respondent: *'Jewellery or cars... that's what makes the money.'*

Interviewer: *'Right so, you're doing two in one burglaries for the keys, then?'*

Respondent: *'Yeah, keys and jewellery yeah.'*

All respondents shared this enthusiasm for jewellery and offered the same explanation for its desirability. All suggested that jewellery, and particularly gold, was very easy to sell. After stealing jewellery, offenders described going through a 'sorting process' whereby they would categorise pieces according to their estimated value and this would determine how they sought to sell it on. Cheap jewellery tended to be offered to local fences in the first instance in the knowledge that it was unlikely to generate any meaningful profits in commercial outlets. For less desirable gold items, respondents described using local market stalls which advertised gold-buying services. These outlets were understood to represent disposal routes which were straightforward to use and which very rarely asked questions of those who utilised their services. Pawn shops, cash-4-gold services and second-hand shops were understood to involve a layer of additional complexity as they often required the presentation of photographic ID. In some cases, respondents sometimes used third parties, usually local addicts, to visit shops on their behalf in exchange for money.

Respondent: *'I've took stuff to Cash4Gold places.'*

Interviewer: *'Ah, right, okay. If we start with the Cash4Gold kind of stuff, do you use postal services or do you take into a shop?'*

Respondent: *'Face to face, I used to. But nowadays you wouldn't do that.'*

Interviewer: *'Right, okay. Has it become harder, would you say?'*

Respondent: *'Yeah. Well... and, now I wouldn't take it into the shop, I'd have someone else do it for me.'*

Interviewer: *'Right. Who would that be?'*

Respondent: *'For the cameras and that.'*

Interviewer: *'Would that just be someone that you pay a bit of money to, or someone you work with?'*

Respondent: *'Money, yeah, it would be some addict. It'll be any addict who's got photo ID because they're stupid and will go into a shop with ID and say, "Hi, my name's Peter Pan, I live here, and this is stolen." You know, if comes back, it's not going to bite me in the arse, it's going to bite them.'*

Interviewer: *'Yes, that makes sense. Were people willing to do that, then, just –'*

Respondent: *'Yes, of course.'*

Interviewer: *'Just wanted a bit of cash?'*

Respondent: *'Mhm. If they're willing to stick a needle in their arm, they're willing to walk into a shop.'*

The vast majority of burglars who stole jewellery described having solid working relationships with one or more local independent jewellery shops. The early stages of developing these relationships were described as being fraught with risk and very much based on a technique of trial and error. Nevertheless, once established, these

relationships were described as being both fruitful and mutually beneficial for both parties. The relationships that the interviewees shared with jewellers were described as being sufficiently trusting that they able to sell significant quantities of jewellery in a single sale, just so long as they respected particular codes of behaviour. An interviewee describes this process:

Interviewer: *'Would you have to sell pieces individually after a burglary, then?'*

Respondent: *'No. [jeweller] was good. We understood each other. I didn't take the p*ss, so he wouldn't shaft me on prices. It was respect, yeah?'*

Interviewer: *'What do you mean?'*

Respondent: *'We understood each other. So he would give me a good price and let me take it all in so long as I didn't tell no-one, not turn up looking wrong, so's I'd wait my turn, look about until others [customers] were done, til they'd gone, yeah?'*

A significant number of respondents described having this type of ongoing relationship with local independent jewellers and the presence of trust between the two parties meant that they were able to move, often large quantities of, goods with relative ease:

Interviewer: *'Going back just to the jewellery, you said that you're going to try and get rid of it as quickly as possible once you've taken it. Would you take it in bulk? Would you take the whole lot to somewhere or do you take pieces individually and try and sell them on their own?'*

Respondent: *'I'd just take the whole lot in bulk.'*

Interviewer: *'Right, and that doesn't usually raise any questions?'*

Respondent: *'Yeah, I'd say they don't really care because they just want to make a quick buck themselves and move it on.'*

Interviewer: *'And how often do you use them... in terms of the jewellers specifically.'*

Respondent: *'Once a month say... It's probably obvious to them then that something's amiss but they just don't care.'*

All of the more successful burglars in the cohort described having an ongoing relationship with a jeweller of this nature. So long as the jewellery that they sold remained of an acceptable standard, they suggested they were able to make sales. It was a commonly held belief among the respondents that the jewellers sold the jewellery on via their networks and melted gold down to make other jewellery.

Whilst a significant number of respondents reported having very well-established trusting, and often lucrative, relationships with local jewellers, the utility of these arrangements was understood to be limited when nominals found themselves in possession of high-value or distinctive pieces of jewellery. One respondent reported having been in possession of a very expensive Rolex watch following involvement in a high-value burglary in London:

Respondent: *'We knew it was expensive, yo. We couldn't just stroll into a shop with that. Not without people asking questions. [Joey] knew a guy that he used to move coke for, yeah? He was the only*

*route we had for this and those rings we got. Man... we didn't have no options. It was crazy what he gave us but we couldn't say nothin'. Bent over he had us, and he knew it. We f*ckin' knew it as well, but we wanted that sh*t gone. You don't want to be left with that.'*

Interviewer: *'How much did you get for the items you sold, then?'*

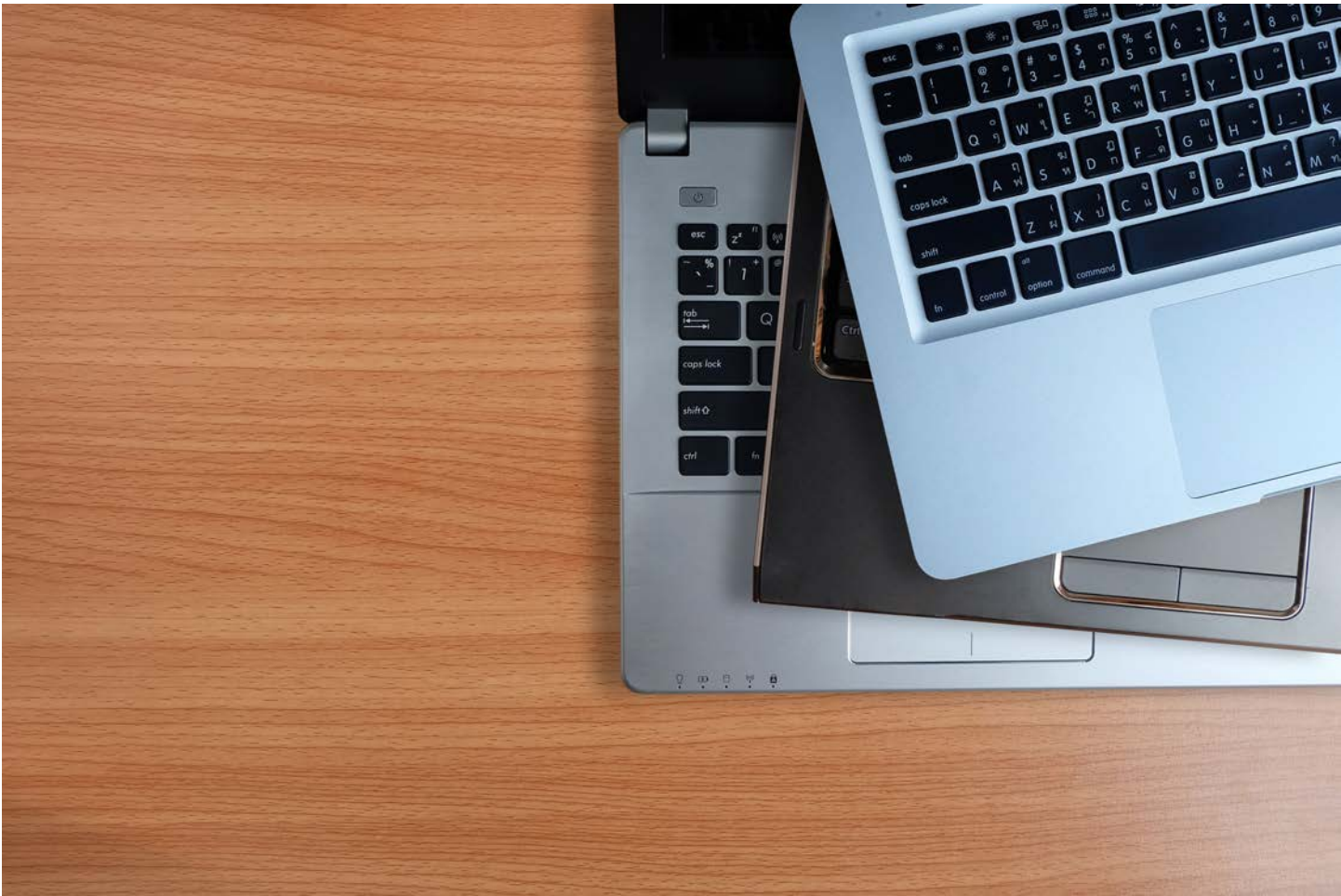
Respondent: *'Between us we got seven grand man. Seven. The watch on itself was worth tens of. The fella bunked in some coke into the bargain and we made up some money that way but we had no choice.'*

Interviewer: *'What happened to the jewellery?'*

Respondent: *'Out the country man. Sh*t like that goes out the country. It can't hang around. That fella could make that happen. We had no chance. We just had to take it.'*

Thus, even when good fortune offered the respondents the prospect of considerable enrichment, they often lacked the skills and networks to fully realise potential high value returns. The men who participated in the research were able to move jewellery in high quantities into the licit market through their contacts in the jewellery industry. However, because their contacts remained at a high-street level, this meant that they were unable to sell more distinctive and valuable pieces as they were considered too conspicuous. Inevitably, this forced respondents to make sales to other black-market actors, as in the case detailed above where a sale was made to someone involved in the supply of cocaine. Another respondent, who had stolen expensive jewellery in residential burglaries detailed how his contacts in the stolen luxury car market proved invaluable in allowing him to realise profits from his goods:

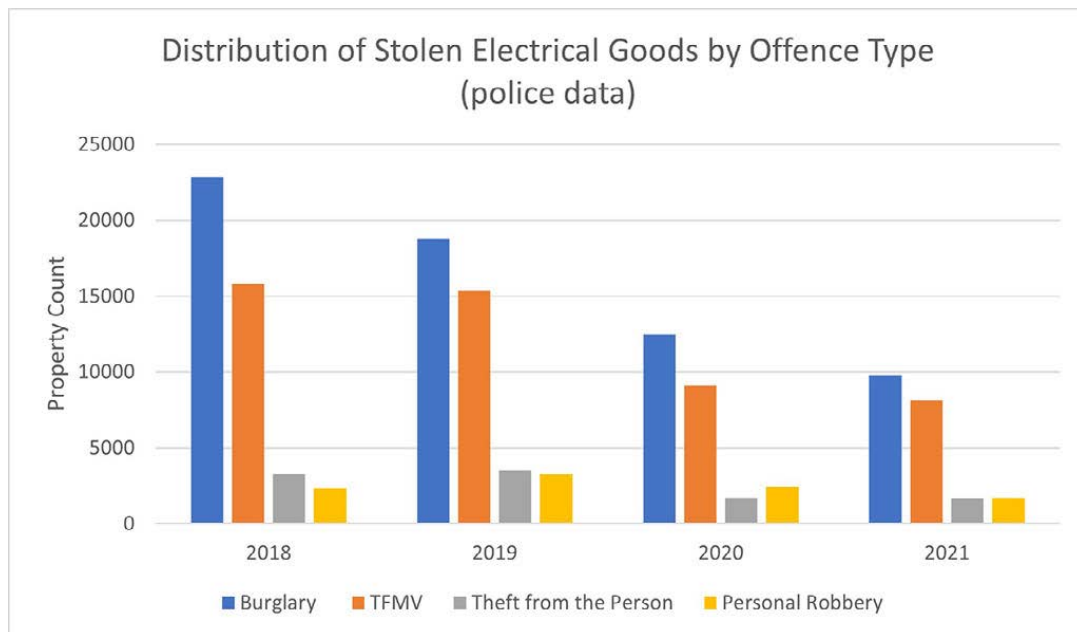
Respondent: *'So let me think... that was when we were sourcing cars for [Eddie]. He was your top of the market man. We were very busy in those days. Bang at it. So when we had those watches and the jewellery from the jobs we had done in [Cornwall], we didn't really know what to do with them. To start with we took them to [George – the jeweller], but it wasn't right. Said it was too risky and would only give us stupid money. We weren't green. So we went to [Eddie]. He knew their worth alright, but he knew where we were at too. Give him his due... worked for him for years, we had. But yeah, he knew people, said he had people who would be interested so he took 'em at an okay price. We couldn't have got them to go any other way. You have eyes on stuff like that.'*



Computing and Electrical Goods

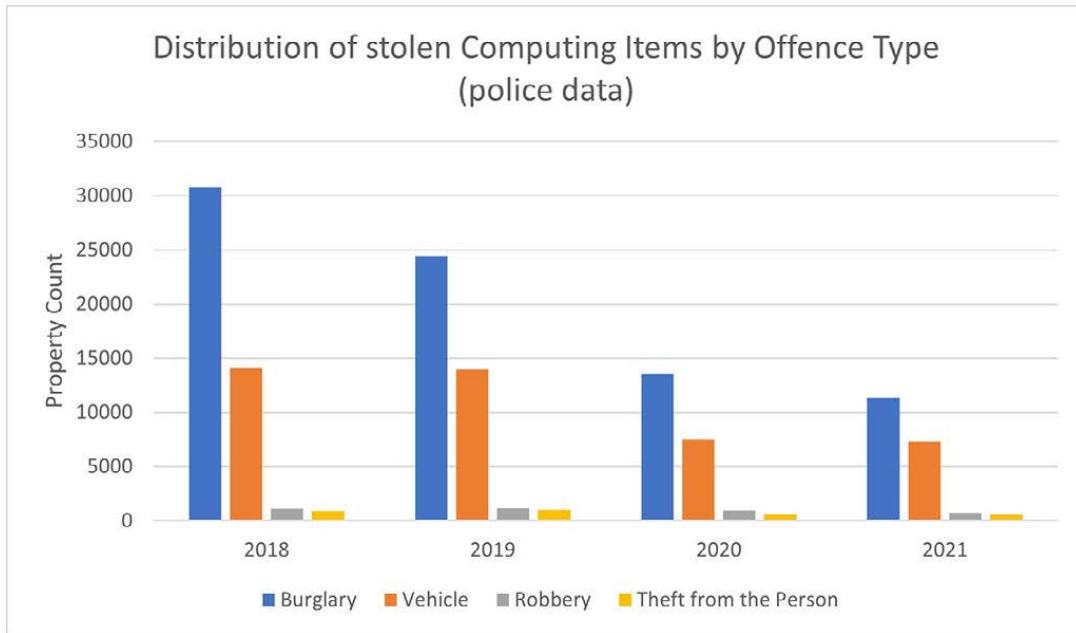
Electrical Goods:

The theft of electrical goods was most often associated with offences of residential burglary and thefts from vehicles. Where this occurred, the most commonly stolen items tended to be televisions, radios, audios systems, kitchen appliances and white goods. However, data relating to personal robbery and theft from the person also included a number of stolen electrical items and this related to the tendency to include goods such as headphones within this category. Thus, during the period of 2018-2021, 48.3% of all electrical goods recorded as stolen, related to burglary offences. The equivalent figure for thefts from the motor vehicle was 36.6%, with 7.7% relating to thefts from the person and 7.4% being attributable to personal robbery. Across all four years under study, electrical goods remained most likely to be targeted during residential burglary offences.



Computing:

Within the overall category of computing goods, the most commonly stolen items were personal laptops and tablets. Though reported stolen less frequently, gaming consoles were also included in this category. The theft of computing goods was found to be overwhelmingly associated with those thefts which do not involve direct contact with the victim. Therefore, there was a concentration of these thefts in the data relating to residential burglaries and thefts from vehicles. Of the total number of computing items recoded as stolen in the research, 61.6% were stolen in residential burglaries. The equivalent figure for thefts from motor vehicles was 33%, with 3% and 2.4% being attributable to personal robbery and theft from the person offences respectively. Across the four-year period under study, the number of computing goods reported as stolen declined steadily.



Offender Perspectives:

Many of the respondents had long and sustained criminal histories and the theft of computing and electrical goods formed a significant part of their experience. However, all of those who took part in the research described their preference for this type of commodity as waning over time:

Respondent: *'Tellies is what everyone wanted. Tellies. I'd get loads of 'em. First thing you'd look for in a house: the telly. Maybe a stereo or whatever, but tellies is what you'd want in them days. Not now. No-one wants that sh*t, now. They ain't worth nowt. It'd be pointless now, taking a telly. Nobody would bother.'*

This was a very common story throughout interviews. Respondents attributed the reduced desirability of second-hand electrical goods to their declining costs in legitimate markets, meaning that the demand was simply no longer there. Thus, for those who made more discerning choices about which items to target, electrical goods no longer made economic sense as they were no longer profitable. Items such as ipads were often deemed to be problematic because of the complexity of the security features they contained and the attendant risks that this brought. Games consoles were deemed to be an exception in that they tended to be sold fairly easily, but for those more organised offenders, these would only be prioritised in the absence of more lucrative (and portable) goods, such as jewellery. One single respondent reported routinely taking electrical goods in burglaries. He suggested that, because the theft of electrical goods was not a particularly lucrative form of criminal enterprise, he and his acquaintances would store the goods until they amassed a sufficient number of goods to sell to a contact who only dealt in bulk sales and was understood to transport goods overseas:

Respondent: *'Well, I've been in different situations where... like, say that I used to burgle my mate. [Burnett] used to burgle my mate*

that I used to burgle, my mate, [Barnie] used to burgle, my mate, [Ridley] used to burgle, and at one time we used to get... three suitcases... we had one each, yeah, and we wanted to fill it with as much electricals as we could, like even just phones, laptops, and all that sort of shit, tablets and that, yeah. We'd go out and we'd all meet up because we'd got a spot where we can all put stuff and know it's safe, that no one else is going to take it, basically, yeah. We'd fill up our things, and then once our suitcases were full, we'd phone up this African guy, called [Lurch], and he'll come and meet us and he'd buy... them off us, but he'd only come if he knows you're getting... like, he'd turn up with five grand, and we'd that split three ways.'

Interviewer: *'He wanted to buy stuff in bulk, like all together?'*

Respondent: *'He would, yeah. He used to send it in containers.'*

It appeared that the theft of electrical equipment in the present day appears to be the preserve of less sophisticated acquisitive criminals who offend to service drug habits. As these respondents tended to be focused upon making quick returns from stolen items, they reported stealing items such as games consoles, music systems and these tended to be sold in local second-hand stores or pawnbrokers. A couple of the respondents had ongoing commercial relationships with local phone and technology shops, and they reported taking laptops there, in one case to sell, but in two others, to be wiped so that they could be sold elsewhere. However, beyond this, laptops were not deemed to be something which could be sold easily and for this reason, respondents did not often target them. It appeared that where demand for these items remained, that goods were predominantly being used to service demand in overseas markets.

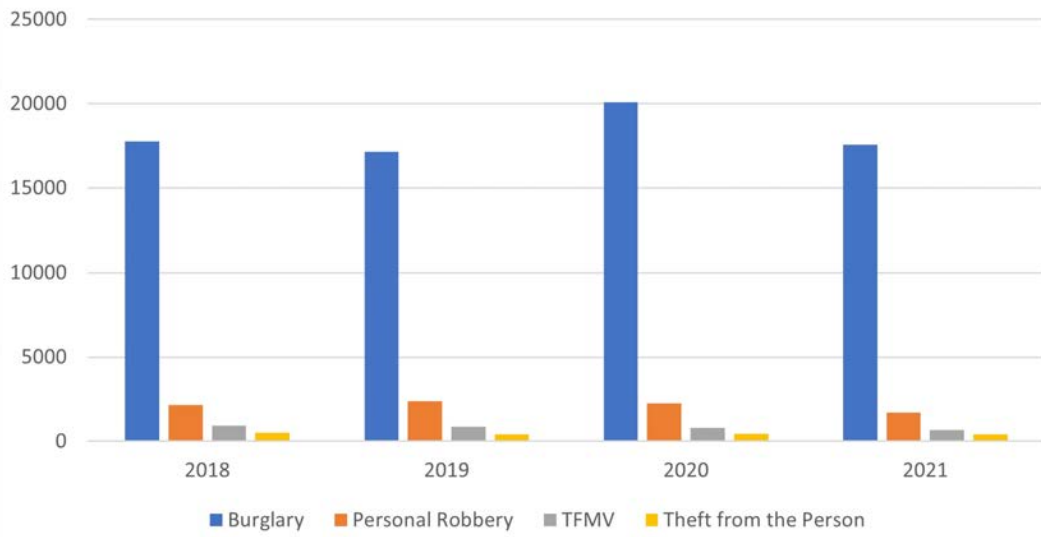


Bicycles

Findings:

Whilst bicycles were only the tenth most commonly stolen property type in the research data, the number of bikes recorded as stolen remained very steady over time and did not reflect the wider trajectory of falling crime rates. Data collected in the research indicates that across the five key neighbourhood acquisitive crime types, burglary is by far the most common way in which bikes are stolen. Of all the bicycles reported to the research as stolen between 2018 and 2021, 84.4% were stolen in domestic burglaries and the tendency for bicycles to be targeted in this way remains constant over time with 83.7% of all bikes reported as stolen in 2018 being taken in burglaries. The equivalent figures for 2019, 2020 and 2021 were 82.4%, 85.2% and 86.6% respectively.

Distribution of Stolen Bicycles by Offence Type



Offender Perspectives:

All of the respondents in the study had experience of stealing bicycles. Collectively, the cohort reported experience of stealing bikes from a variety of locations including from residential properties and personal vehicles. In relation to bike theft, the respondents were very clearly subdivided into two groups. The first group tended to steal bicycles as stand-alone thefts from locations away from residential properties and sometimes from vehicles. When engaged in burglaries, members of this group tended to make very calculated decisions about which items to steal and only took bikes on rare occasions if they knew them to be of significant value. The second group were far less discerning in their selection of targets, knew little about bikes and stole them on a fairly regular basis, often during the course of burglaries. One respondent who belonged to the latter group, had stolen a number of bikes, including during burglaries. He was a heavy drug user and his approach to theft was fairly chaotic and this was representative of the accounts of many research participants. Discussing his engagement with bicycle theft he said:

Respondent: *'Bikes, yeah I took bikes.'*

Interviewer: *'Many?'*

Respondent: *'Yeah, suppose. I did. But they ain't worth sh*t.'*

Interviewer: *'How come? How much would you get for them?'*

Respondent: *'Fifty quid usually. [Mark] always gave a flat fifty. He gave me a tonne once but... that was a joke. Our [respondent's brother] said it was worth loads... like thousands loads and we got a*

hundred.'

Interviewer: *'Right so, you usually get a flat fee for a bike. If this one was different, why did you take the money?'*

Respondent: *'I didn't have a f*ckin' scoobie [clue]. I didn't have no idea what it was worth. I just wanted the money to get some drugs.'*

Interviewer: *'Didn't you ever check it out before you sold them?'*

Respondent: *'Nah, no never. I just wanted rid. End of.'*

This was a recurring theme among those engaged in less sophisticated forms of bike theft. They had little, or no, knowledge about the value of the items they took, they did not seek to research the bikes they had in their possession and instead merely sought to dispose of them as quickly as they could in order to access cash for drugs.

Conversely, there were others who approached the theft of bikes with a more entrepreneurial spirit and they were infinitely more knowledgeable about the technical features, and monetary value, of the items they stole. One respondent had previously worked in a bike shop and had a very good working knowledge of bikes because of this, whilst others researched the features of bikes in advance of their theft. One man, for example commented:

Respondent: *'If it was something like a two hundred quid bike, you wouldn't bother it. ...Some addicts might though... Some addicts might take it, though...But they need to get twenty quid, don't they?... I would go on Google, see what it's worth and then if it's worth taking, then take it.'*

Many of the respondents engaged in online research of this nature, whilst others relied on their own existing knowledge of bike values, as outlined in the excerpt below:

Respondent: *'I'd only take decent bikes. Something you can make some money off. Mountain bikes. Good ones. Not high street bikes. Your Treks, your Specialized, Giants they always sell. Decent stuff. Not shoppers, not birds' [women's] bikes. I don't mess about with worthless crap.'*

Interviewer: *'So did you research bikes in advance?'*

Respondent: *'No, I just know what fetches cash, what's worth summit, so I'd look for it and only bother with stuff like that.'*

The disposal routes for bikes differed between the two subsets of offenders, but crucially, local handlers were important to understanding the behaviours of both groups. Whilst the use of fences was widespread throughout the disposal of all commodity types, fences of bicycles appeared to be slightly different insofar as there appeared to be a degree of specialisation involved in handling bikes. As in the example given above, some respondents reported occasionally taking bikes to their regular local handlers where they could generate a small, flat fee, but this tended to be fairly infrequent. Instead, it was more common for interviewees to report that they had a specific point of contact to whom they would take bikes and who didn't take a range of other goods as other fences would. The quotations below offer some insight into conversations on this subject:

Respondent: *'If you had a bike, yeah...everyone round here took*

their bikes to [Simon]. He'd buys all the nicked bikes you can take. He'd take 'em all. BMXs, top of the range mountain bikes, average crappy things... whatever. He had it. He was at it for years. Still is.'

Respondent: *'Or, there's a little Italian guy on [estate name], he takes bikes. The guy's been doing the same shit for like 30 years. He buys stolen bikes off all the kids.'*

A significant number of people spoke about their experience of these handlers who specialised in bikes and their specialisation possibly relates in some degree to their ability to store bikes. A number of people spoke about the storage units or garages that were used by the people to whom they sold stolen bicycles, and this appeared to differentiate them from handlers involved in the purchase of other types of goods. For example, the respondent below described the lock-up where he took his stolen bicycles:

Interviewer: *'Where would you take the bikes to sell them, then?'*

Respondent: *'Always to [Dave]'*

Interviewer: *'Okay, the guy you mentioned earlier? Did you take them to his house?'*

Respondent: *'No, he had a lock-up. Like a storage tin... you know metal like, you know the ones? I'd meet him there. I'd have to take the bikes there.'*

Some of these handlers were known to sell bikes online. One respondent described the handler as 'running a bloody good bike shop, for years.' This 'bike shop' was of course illegitimate but seemed to be common practice, with many respondents expressing

the belief that the handlers to whom they sold bikes engaged in extensive online sales. Some were also known to sell the various components of bikes separately, particularly when dealing with more expensive bikes as the two men below discuss:

Respondent: *'I sold them as a whole bike, knowing that [Tony's] going to break them down and milk it... Pedals, wheels that are worth six hundred quid a set. Suspension springs, brakes.'*

Respondent: *'Oh aye, if you took something decent, the parts are always worth more separate and that just makes more sense... strip it all down and sell it off that way. He always did. You'd see it on his shop, the parts, separate like, different adverts. He wasn't daft.'*

The route to online sales platforms was not always a direct one, often involving a third party handler, as described above. Six of the respondents had direct experience of selling bikes online, but the vast majority described this as being something which they lacked the capability for. They described their lack of knowledge of online contexts and feared that their lack of expertise meant that they would incriminate themselves too easily. For those at the less organised and sophisticated end of the criminal spectrum, the possibility of selling online had simply not occurred to them. Of the six who had sold bikes directly online, two might have been considered to do so fairly consistently whilst the others did so on an adhoc basis. The respondent below explained that his inability to engage in an established pattern of online sales related to issues of storage:

Respondent: *'You can't just sell 'em [bikes] all the time. See, where you gonna keep 'em, for a start? Where you gonna put all them bikes? You can't. So I sold some. I put 'em up and got rid of 'em but not regular like... it weren't regular.'*

The six respondents who had sold bikes online reported using Facebook Marketplace, Gumtree and Ebay in addition to local online sales pages on social media. Only one person reported selling components separately and this was the person who had previous experience of working in the bike industry. Engagement with online sales, was undoubtedly restricted to the more accomplished group of bicycle thieves who make calculated assessments of their targets. Their engagement with online platforms allowed them to realise market value for their goods because of the legitimacy it afforded them. However, this remained beyond the reach of the vast majority of respondents because they lacked the knowledge and skills to achieve this. Instead, they relied on engagement with local handlers and pawn shops to dispose of bicycles.



Industry Perspectives:

Bike theft is at the forefront of many conversations taking place across the commercial and not-for-profit sector. A number of manufacturers, retailers and cycling organisations shared their perspectives on these discussions with the research team and offered suggestions around how bicycle theft might be tackled more effectively. Mirroring discussions in the tool industry, the issues of forensic marking and registration of ownership were at the heart of many of these conversations. However, the location of bicycles in a leisure-based market meant that the dynamics underpinning the industry appeared to differ to the commercial tool market somewhat. Whilst a number of bicycle sales are inevitably driven by theft replacements, there is a widespread belief that this issue is not as marked as in the tool industry and people often merely seek to withdraw from cycling or to buy cheaper products, after being victimised multiple times. Nevertheless, discussions identified the replication of key commercial considerations around the delivery of marking and registration schemes between the two industries.

In recognition of the importance of these issues, the Bicycle Association have recently launched a document which seeks to promote conversations around locks, insurance and registration and marking at the point of sale among vendors. The location of the promotion of insurance, marking and registration at the point of sale, rather than the home, they suggest is pivotal to achieving better outcomes in relation to bike theft. Whilst the Bicycle Association are strong advocates of supporting cyclists, vendors and manufacturers to engage with processes of marking and registration, they do not support the introduction of legislation to mandate this. This particular issue proved to be a point of dissent for others respondents, with many pointing to low levels of engagement in voluntary schemes as

the rationale to consider legislative intervention.

As within the tool industry, several barriers to achieving better market penetration for marking and registration were identified and, whilst there was some overlap in the arguments offered, some were specific to the bicycle market. Reflecting discussions around tools, it was generally agreed that marking might be best placed at the point of manufacture. This was deemed to be especially important in relation to bikes as, at the more expensive end of the market, it is widely acknowledged that owners are unwilling to engage with marking chemicals, stickers or etching because of their potential to damage paintwork or carbon frames. Thus, a marking process capable of being integrated at manufacture was deemed to be important to protect the integrity of the product. As part of these discussions, the possible integration of a scannable ID chip into the frame was considered as a potential to this solution. This was deemed to be preferable to schemes which include tracking technology into e-bikes as there was a suggestion that the need to maintain an ongoing subscription to service would be unappealing to customers.

At the lower end of the market, a recent pilot study has been carried out by a high street outlet to include scannable stickers in bike frames under the several layers of lacquer, and the findings of this trial project are likely to be available soon. Like the tool market, the vast majority of bikes in the UK are not produced domestically, and manufacturing processes tend to be concentrated in East Asia. The creation of a solution which can be used throughout global markets is imperative as bikes are often moved between national markets to service global demands. The creation and implementation of solutions will therefore require participation of strategic level representation from participating companies. Respondents suggested that appetite for these measures would be determined by

the commercial implications of their adoption. Inevitably, the adoption of marking on bicycles has much greater potential to increase the identification of stolen bikes sold as whole products than those broken for parts.

A significant number of post-sale forensic registration products exist in the bike market, but consumer engagement with these products remains limited, with a significant proportion of custom being derived from publicly funded marking initiatives. Best practice was identified in a number of police forces in relation to offering access to forensic marking and registration schemes. A number of forces had accessed funds from Home Office initiatives, PCC budgets and through private sponsorship to offer members of the public access to these services for free. Learning from these schemes underscores the importance of hosting marking events where both marking and registration takes place on site, as members of the public consistently failed to complete the process when merely provided with equipment and information. All respondents fully understood this dynamic and were therefore united in their agreement that registration must not be allowed to become the responsibility of the consumer after purchase.

There was disagreement among the respondents about the requirements that ought to be made around bicycle registration, with some favouring the French model of legal mandation and others preferring voluntaristic arrangements. Despite the variation in these positions, there was universal agreement on the intrinsic value of registration. Some of the resistance to legally requiring registration related to the perception that this might be dependent on the development of a centrally administered, possibly state-owned, database. However, an exploratory project to establish a search mechanism capable of searching all bike registration systems was flagged to the research as a potential solution to this issue. The project carried out in partnership between the DfT and police has not

yet progressed to the point of securing successful tenders but is something which holds great potential, not just in the field of bicycle theft, but also wider stolen property markets and its realisation ought to be leant support.

A number of potential barriers to the effective delivery of registration at the point of sale were identified in the research. In the first instance, the high turnover of staff in chain stores was understood to create issues in the continuity of training of personnel. Training staff to facilitate registration was found to be much more effective in smaller, independent outlets. Capitalising on this success, one registration scheme is currently working with a retailer to develop an API to be integrated into the retailer's point of sale system which will allow registration at the click of a button. The wider integration of such technology into PoS systems was flagged by other manufacturers and outlets as a potential stumbling block on account of the variation of systems in existence, and the fact that many lack the sophistication to facilitate this. Most participants (comprising both general retailers and manufacturers who owned outlets) suggested that they would be willing to incorporate registration into the sale process in the event that the required technology could be found, and that the time for registration could be minimised. They sought to raise the issue that many sales take place online and that procedures for these sales must also be considered. Where sales were made directly by the manufacturer, all were happy to consider communication with the customer to advise on product registration but direct sales represent a tiny proportion of overall bike purchases with the vast majority taking place through third parties. The involvement of bike merchants, therefore, is essential and this makes the dissemination of information regarding the incorporation of registration in the sales process very difficult as the Bicycle Association estimate that there are around 1900 independent retailers alone. The challenges associated with this task were used by many as the rationale for the need to legislate to require the

by many as the rationale for the need to legislate to require the registration of bicycles at the point of sale. The second-hand market in bicycles was understood to raise questions around the transfer of ownership under systems which mandate registration. Whilst proponents of mandatory registration envisaged that legal requirements would only be applicable to primary ownership, the ease with which ownership can be transferred in current schemes, using only the buyer's email address was highlighted.

Improving police responses to bike theft was highlighted as being essential to ensuring the success of marking and registration schemes. It was widely acknowledged, even among police officers, that bike frame numbers and registration databases are not routinely checked. The implementation of more effective procedures around bike theft are essential and training of officers will form an important part of this process. More support for officers in dealing with the more complex and organised aspects of bike theft is also needed. During the research, police officers highlighted instances where they were unable to provide operational responses to sustained and organised campaigns of high-value bike thefts, choosing to focus instead on target-hardening campaigns within the community. Best practice relating to identifying and responding to organised bicycle thefts has been identified in Police Scotland who have successfully investigated a number of these cases and who engage in ground-breaking work with academia to tackle this area of criminality.



Vehicles

In existing literature, a very clear divide exists between cars which are not subsequently recovered and are resold or broken down for parts, and those that are later recovered after having been used by offenders, either recreationally, or in the course of subsequent offences. The literature indicates the dominance of organised criminality in the perpetration of the former form of vehicle theft. Interview data in the current project supports this idea. Twenty six respondents had experience of stealing either cars or motorbikes. The vast majority stole cars in order to use them to commit further crimes. These cars would be taken in the course of burglaries as offenders stole keys and used the cars to carry other stolen goods. They then described using the cars for short periods to carry out subsequent offences. The interview excerpt below details one person's experience which was typical of this process:

Respondent: *'I'd always take the keys for the car.'*

Interviewer: *'What would you do with the car?'*

Respondent: *'Well I'd drive away in it, first off. Then I'd use it commit more crime.'*

Interviewer: *'What kind of crime?'*

Respondent: *'More burglaries. See you take the plates off another car... [one] that's the same obviously... and then you get to drive around on it for a few days or whatever. Then you can dump it or sell it...depending.'*

Interviewer: *'Okay, where would you sell it?'*

Respondent: *'Ah man, someone always wants cars. You can always sell cars.'*

This was fairly typical of most accounts whereby respondents would steal cars and temporarily use them on false plates to commit more crime, before selling or abandoning the vehicle. When selling vehicles in this context, they tended to rely on informal drug networks to make sales. However, other respondents engaged in more instrumental vehicle thefts where cars were sold immediately after being stolen. Some of these thefts were commissioned by third parties where interviewees were tasked with stealing a specific type of car in exchange for a set fee. One respondent described his involvement in this form of vehicle theft:

Respondent: *'We had been involved in twocing cars for a while. We loved it... back then, you'd never get to drive good cars and we were bombing around in all sorts, it was a f*cking riot. We sold them to this bloke round our way.'*

Interviewer: *'How would you describe him? How did you know him?'*

Respondent: *'He weren't a fucking gangster or nowt. He was a family man, a businessman, like. He sold a bit of gear and he took the cars. He didn't get involved in nothing else, I don't think.'*

Interviewer: *'So is he the person who asked you to steal the cars?'*

Respondent: *'No... well, yeah kind of. So we always took the motors to [Barry]. He would always take them, but he said one day that he*

noticed we'd a few, like we'd been getting lucky and asked if we wanted to do some jobs for a mate of his. Like certain cars and that.'

Interviewer: *'And you did it?'*

Respondent: *'Yeah man. It was no difference, just you'd have to look for those motors... the ones he wanted like and I'm not gonna lie to you they were more fun anyways... We did that for a few years.'*

Interviewer: *'What happened to the cars that you stole?'*

Respondent: *'[laughs] We never asked no questions like that, man. Though we did always say that he had one of those imaginary friends that kids have. That he just got into shifting more motors, more serious, like. Abroad, they went, I think. But we didn't get involved in none of that.'*

Four of the respondents reported stealing vehicles on behalf of others in exchange for a flat fee in the manner outlined above. The fees that they received ranged from one hundred pounds to five hundred pounds. The respondent below described being approached as a young person to steal vehicles:

Respondent: *'First of all, it was a case of... I was probably about 17... and then we got approached by some older lads who were probably up to their own little things in their own little ways, and they were basically saying to us, like as kids were saying, "Look, if you can get us a BMW, we'll give you 500 quid for the BMW." So yeah, so what we would basically do is they would give us a slide hammer, which is basically the thing for popping out doors, you know for dents in the doors... They would normally give us one of those. That was kind of on the basis that if we lost that we had to give them 100 quid.'*

There'd normally be three of us and we would sort of scour the streets, really, just kind of looking around. We'd look for property like a car in a more quieter place than as opposed as with a main road, because at the time... I wasn't experienced, I'd say, really at the time, but you know normally a case of you'd always find a little stone with a little bit of like flint in it, a sharp edged stone, which would pop the quarter light on the car, push through the glass. Obviously, reach in, opened the door handle, put the slide hammer into the ignition, push in, turn it, pull out the barrel, and obviously put a screwdriver in and turn it, and drive the car away.'

Interviewer: *'Brilliant. Okay. How did those lads find you, then, to ask you to do that?'*

Respondent: *'Because at the time, we was nicking... it was more things out of cars we was looking at back then, so we was known for doing that. It's just obviously, the people you're going to sell the cars stuff to, these are the bigger people than us at the time. We was only seventeen, sixteen and that, so it was like the people we'd go and sell things to, it's normally through a weed dealer or a hash dealer or someone who was selling a bit of you know, a bit of cannabis, that you'd go through a link through them because they was obviously... where a lot of people buy weed and stuff from them, they're going to know loads of different criminals in different areas. You'd normally go to him, try and sell him something. He'd say, "Right take it to so and so." You'd go from there, take it to him, and then they'd say, "Look, can you get hold of any cars, or anything? If you can, you know, this is what we can give you.'"*

Interviewer: *'Brilliant. Do you have any inkling as to what happened with those cars after you gave them to them?'*

Respondent: *'No. No. No, well, that weren't really sort of my side of things really. The case was just... you know, it's 500 quid a car, and that you know, at the time, for me that was a lot of money.'*

Another respondent suggested that, when higher value cars were specifically requested, they might expect to be able to receive a higher fee for obtaining them:

Interviewer: *'And does anyone ever ask you to take them [cars] in advance?'*

Respondent: *'Yeah. They put in orders for certain types of car... I'd normally drive the cars.'*

Interviewer: *'Right okay so, you usually drive the cars. In terms of the cars then, how much, you mentioned that it's like £150 ish for a bike, how much would you say you get for a car?'*

Respondent: *'Between £500 could be up £1500, depending what car it is okay. Like an Audi RS6 or something like that you're getting £1500 two grand for it.'*

Other people's TOMV offences were of their own volition and relied on informal networks to sell goods. These arrangements also tended to be based on flat fee arrangements as one participant explains:

Respondent: *'The cars I'd take to the pikeys, and they'd buy it... Yes, I knew some travellers that live in [Roherham] and I could turn up... say like I stole four cars in one night before, yeah, left them all down this road parked up on the road with the keys under the wheels at the back, and then when I... while I was driving out, I went on the site in*

the morning, and he's like, "Where's the cars, chappie, where's the cars?" I said, "They're on the road," and we jumped in his car, drove down there and I showed him every car. I got out, got the key, opened the door, started it, got in this car with the... obviously locked it all and got back in. He give me £800 each car.'

Interviewer: *'£800 a car. Right, okay.'*

Respondent: *'Yeah.'*

Interviewer: *'Was that a decent price?'*

Respondent: *'Some them of good cars, as well, man... Some of them were good cars, worth good money.'*

Interviewer: *'Right, so there was a standardised price regardless of what the car was?'*

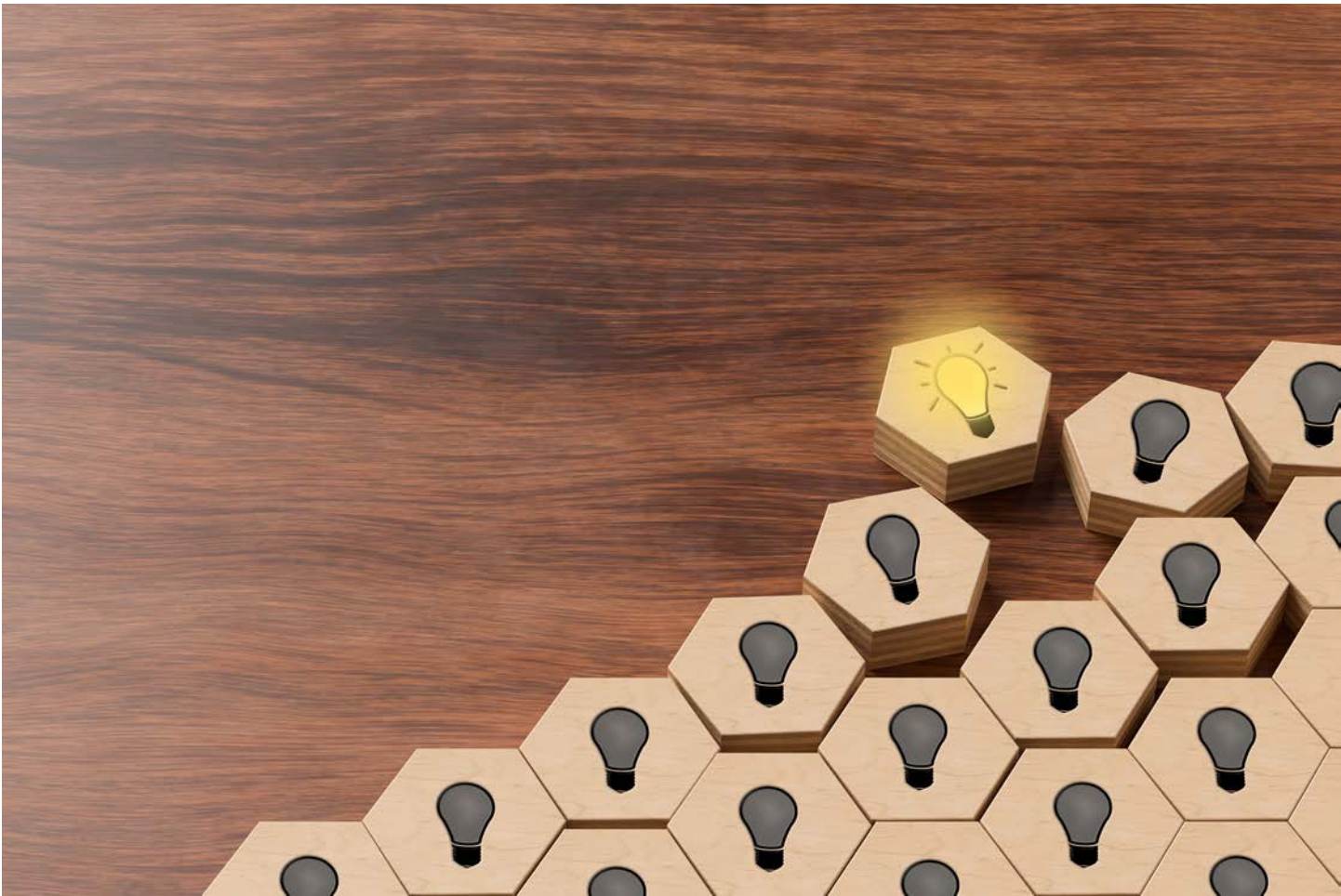
Respondent: *'He wouldn't take brand new ones. He was selling them for bits, I'm sure of it.'*

Interviewer: *'How did you make contact with him?'*

Respondent: *'I met him in prison.'*

For those involved in the sale of stolen vehicles, none had direct links with overseas networks, though their accounts indicate that these may have been the destinations for the items they sold. Whilst some had experience of selling to domestic chop shops, this appeared to be the extent of their first-hand experience of organised crime. However, it appeared that significant cross over between organised crime activity and neighbourhood offending existed where individuals

committed TOMV offences on behalf of third parties. The people for whom vehicles were procured were understood to commission large numbers of thefts and to dispose of high numbers of vehicles, indicating an organised element to their offending. The type of car theft outlined above is only able to account for a proportion of vehicle thefts in the UK, with a significant proportion being attributable to widespread OCG activity. Data obtained from police forces and ROCUs clearly demonstrates that a significant proportion of currently mapped acquisitive threats relate to vehicle crime. Among these cases reported to the research, a significant number involved FNO's and international disposal routes and these forms of vehicle thefts have very different implications for policing responses, including considerations around national borders.

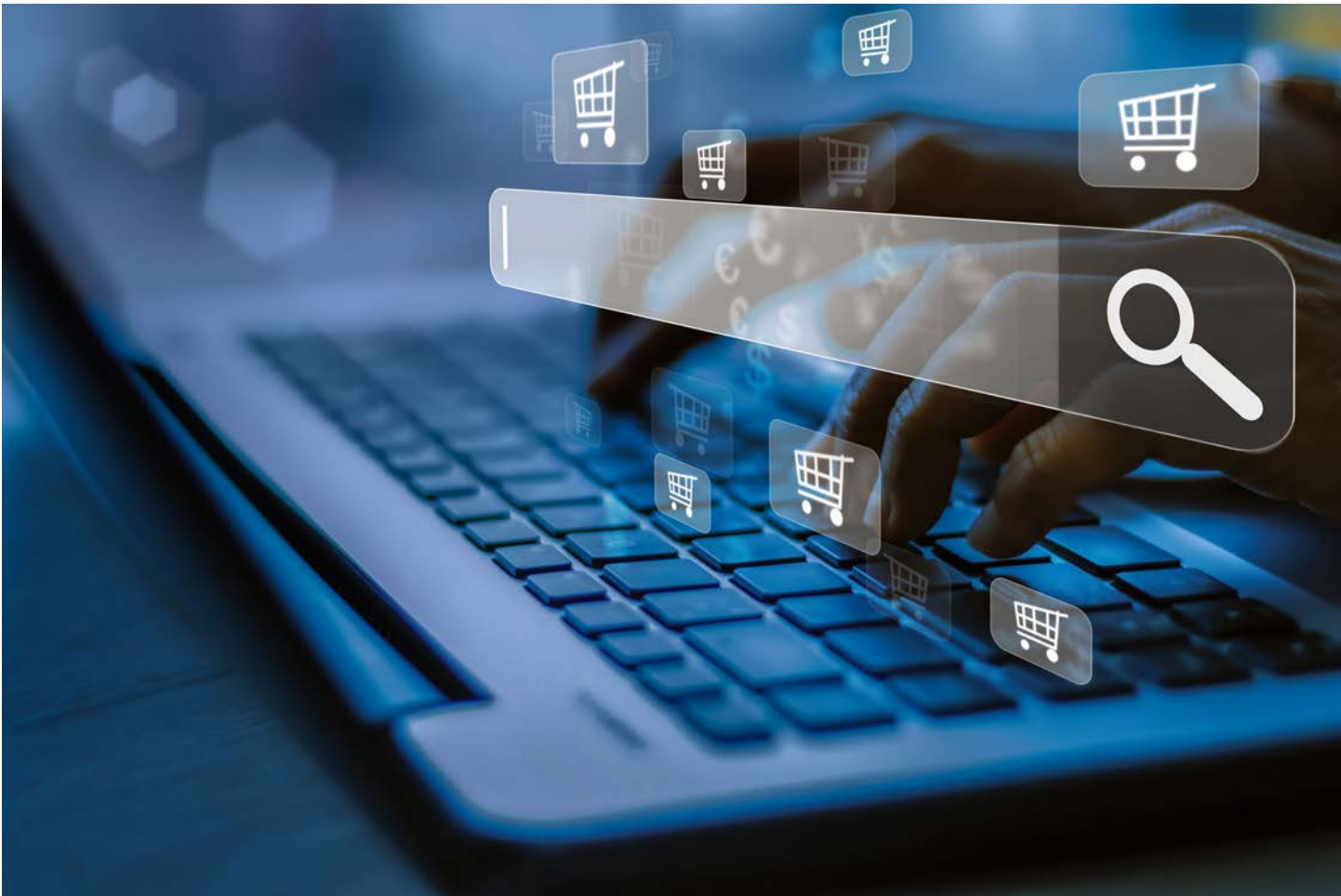


Key Considerations



Ports

The exportation of stolen goods through ports was flagged in a significant proportion of police data relating to SOAC. The ability of OCGs to export goods to external markets is of central importance to ensuring the profitability of their business model. Interviews were therefore conducted with a number of people involved in the policing and regulation of ports. The policing of ports was routinely described as inadequate owing to the sheer volume of items passing through ports on a daily basis. Interventions in cargo, therefore, are reliant upon the existence of intelligence which is in short supply. Consequently, there are huge practical barriers to identifying stolen items and managing them after seizure. Despite these difficulties, those involved in the policing of ports reported recovering a significant number of stolen vehicles in their work, though they understood this to be a tiny proportion of the goods passing through borders. For this reason, they suggested that potential solutions to the problem lay beyond the remit of operational policing and ought to include a focus on the regulation of registration requirements for exports. The process for exporting containers of goods was universally described by experts as being tailor made to facilitate criminality. The anonymity afforded to exporters when using a brokerage system to ship goods was identified as allowing criminals to operate with impunity. Experts detailed the process by which members of the public are able to cold-call shipping brokers, commission a container by declaring a category of goods such as 'household items' and have the shipping container delivered and collected by third party freight forwarder. The Bills of Lading of many of the containers passing through UK ports, therefore, contain the details of people who have no knowledge of their contents and who have had no direct contact with those who have filled them. This creates a vacuum of accountability when it comes to the content of



Online Sales Platforms

Legitimate businesses are heavily implicated in the facilitation of acquisitive crime on account of their role in selling stolen goods. Online sales platforms play a significant role in allowing offenders to realise profits from crime by operating as a key disposal route for particular commodities. Research data indicates that online marketplaces are routinely used by those operating at the more successful end of the criminal spectrum and are favoured as outlets for commodities such as vehicle parts and accessories, tools and bicycles. The anonymity afforded by online platforms is key to ensuring the profitability of crime in the way that it allows offenders to create a veneer of respectability and to move goods in significant quantities, and across geographical distances, that would otherwise not be possible. The respondents who reported using digital outlets to sell stolen items detailed experience of numerous websites including Facebook Marketplace, Ebay and Gumtree and none of the offenders who reported selling online had been flagged for suspicious behaviour or experienced difficulties in listing or selling stolen goods, despite having sold goods in large quantities over protracted periods of time.

Representatives from online marketplaces were asked about their experiences of stolen goods sales and their regulation. They discussed the measures they use to identify and remove stolen goods from their platforms, the challenges they face in attempting to curb the flow of stolen goods through digital portals, and potential reforms that could increase their capacity to address the issue of stolen goods being sold via their businesses. Company representatives were very open about the fact that their businesses were used as an outlet for stolen items and they viewed this reality as undesirable as it had potential to detract from the respectability and

reputability their brand. There was consensus around the commercial imperative to take criminality seriously, with one respondent commenting that 'trust is an essential component of business success' and respondents suggested that it was incumbent upon them to create a space in which users felt safe in order to generate repeat custom. Consequently, companies stated that tackling disreputable sellers formed a priority in their business model and were able to provide extensive detail on measures undertaken by their companies in attempt to limit the extent to which criminals are able to profit from online sales.

There was significant overlap between the measures adopted by online companies in their fight against criminal use of their outlets. In the first instance, the protections offered by the algorithmic governance of online spaces was highlighted as the primary means by which suspicious or problematic sellers might be identified for further investigation, though most likely as a result of reaching a specific volume of sales, or for selling particular items. Consequently, the activities of those involved in the sale of stolen goods remains unlikely to be captured by this process which is more attuned to the detection of illegitimate commercial sellers, or those engaged in the sale of prohibited items.

Beyond this, companies described having good working relationships with law enforcement partners. The police were described by one company as being 'responsive' to any concerns they raised about problematic sellers but suggested that they would like to see them taking a more proactive stance on flagging those engaged in illegal selling to commercial partners. There was recognition of the pressures faced by police and of the limited resources assigned to policing acquisitive crime, but there was a suggestion that small improvements might be made despite these wider limitations simply through the more effective utilisation of existing resources. Whilst

some companies sought to highlight the proactive stance adopted by particular policing bodies, they also simultaneously observed a lack of engagement with existing resources capable of assisting in the fight against stolen goods. One company discussed the under-utilisation of their dedicated law enforcement liaison officer, whilst another highlighted that the 'backdoor' access to their systems that had been granted to those tasked with policing acquisitive crime remained unused. There is, therefore, considerable scope to improve the efficacy of joint working relationships simply by improving awareness of existing resources. From the perspective of commercial partners, this is an essential element in moving forward as they are limited in their capacity to identify goods as stolen without confirmation by law enforcement. Thus, online platforms have a genuine dependence on police involvement to be able to take action against those selling stolen goods on their sites.

However, at an earlier stage in the commercial process, there are numerous measures which can be taken by online platforms which can serve to create a more hostile environment for those seeking to use sites for illegitimate means. Again, companies were able to detail several policies and procedures aimed at reducing the number of such users, but were also simultaneously cognisant of the limitations of these measures in relation to stolen goods specifically. Compliance with 'Know Your Customer' regulations, for example, was understood to be more routinely employed in relation to volume commercial sellers, rather than those likely to be involved in the sale of stolen goods. Moreover, the use of digital fingerprinting was understood to be effective in banning individual phone numbers, email accounts and IP addresses (and more recently, devices), but was ultimately something which could be easily circumvented by those using more sophisticated technology to disguise such information.

Consequently, much of their strategy for tackling the sale of stolen

goods centred on the responsabilisation of site users and an emphasis on the principle of *caveat emptor*. Attention was drawn to the 'report buttons' or 'regulatory portals' included on websites through which users are encouraged to report suspicious activity. One company supplemented this function with a 'strong focus on user education' about how to identify and report goods suspected to be stolen by including extensive information for customers on their site. This 'report' function was understood to be used with regularity, with one company suggesting that 120,000 suspicious adverts had been flagged by site users in the previous year. The outcome of these reports, however, remained unclear and, as stated above, often remained dependent on police involvement. Companies described the way in which nudges towards sagacious decision-making among site users were also algorithmically supported by the automated promotion of 'top rated sellers' with a good track record of numerous sales and positive feedback. In order to ensure their own safety, customers are encouraged to engage with seller ratings in order to avoid becoming involved with illegitimate sellers. However, in relation to the sale of stolen goods, this remains a problematic approach given that many of the research participants described the way in which the pursuit of positive customer reviews came to form part of their business model. Offenders involved in the sale of tools and bicycles reported receiving extremely positive feedback from those to whom they sold goods. Engagement with seller reviews, therefore, does not appear an effective strategy for those seeking to avoid buying stolen goods. Rather, it appears potentially much more effective in allowing people to avoid those involved in fraud or poor service.

In the accounts offered by online marketplaces, therefore, there appeared to be a fundamental and irresolvable tension between their emphasis on user reponsibilisation on the one hand, and their failure to provide site users with the information and mechanisms which would empower them to identify and avoid stolen goods on the other

would empower them to identify and avoid stolen goods on the other. Drawing attention to this point of conflict, respondents were asked about the feasibility of measures which might represent genuine empowerment of site users to identify and avoid stolen goods. Of particular interest was the potential extension of API software in adverts so that consumers could check items against registers of stolen goods to gain a better understanding of their provenance before purchase. The efficacy of such measures is, to a large extent, dependent on the degree to which particular pieces of information are mandated at the point of listing, and perspectives on the practicability of such requirements were varied. From a commercial perspective, one company said that they would be unlikely to consider the introduction of mandatory information such as bike frame numbers, or serial numbers, as it was likely to 'introduce friction to the listing process' and ultimately drive custom elsewhere. This issue was also acknowledged by another respondent who suggested that any such attempts to reform listing requirements would require universal implementation across all sales platforms to ensure that they were both fair and effective. Moreover, given its potential to protect site users, another company said that it would be willing to consider the incorporation of this technology but that the need for its adoption across all platforms simultaneously was inescapable. The added advantage of requiring identifying information at the point of advertisement, rather than allowing checks at the point of purchase, is that stolen goods can be prevented from being advertised, much in the same way that HPI checks help preclude the listing of stolen vehicles. There are, of course, many complexities which serve to muddy the water in this area such as the possibility that such requirements might prevent legitimate sellers from advertising genuine items which lack requisite information. Moreover, the infrastructural investments required of companies to develop and implement this technology across their sites was regularly raised as a concern by participants. However, these mechanisms are not without precedent and are already in existence in numerous formats across

the ecommerce sector. Exploration of the ways in which they might be extended is therefore of central importance, especially given that one of the major online platforms identified the potential to have 'free real time access to registers of identification' as one of the key factors which could help them reduce the volume of sales of stolen goods.



High-Street Retailers

High-street stores formed a central component of the disposal routes for stolen goods used by the neighbourhood acquisitive criminals who participated in the research. The vast majority of offenders described having very solid, well-established relationships with particular businesses such as independent jewellers through which they were able to move significant quantities of goods on a regular basis. All of the respondents also regularly used outlets such as second-hand retailers and cash for gold services in order to monetise the goods they stole. A few participants reported encountering difficulties in their attempts to sell goods in shops, with a small number having been arrested after being reported by business owners. However, these accounts were fairly anomalous and were not representative of the ease with which respondents could realise profit in these settings. The offenders demonstrated awareness of the changing landscape around surveillance and registration and identification requirements, but they often had techniques to overcome these difficulties.

The retailers who participated in the research were cognisant of the fact that the sale of stolen goods remained an intractable issue for the second-hand retail market. In recognition of this fact, second-hand stores detailed several policies and procedures they had implemented in attempt to minimise the flow of illegitimate goods through their businesses. However, they were also simultaneously aware of the limitations of these measures which they understood to continue to allow stolen goods to be sold in their premises. In the first instance, the impotence of registration requirements was understood to relate to the failure to include photographs on membership cards. Whilst customers are required to provide identification at the point of registration, membership cards can be subsequently transferred

between users, meaning that retailers do not have accurate information about those using their services. Furthermore, the procedures applied by companies to those suspected of attempting to sell stolen goods mean that often, such behaviours are without consequence. Among retailers, refusal of items was described as the primary response to those identified as attempting to sell stolen goods. Retailers suggested that if individuals were identified as attempting to sell stolen goods on a regular basis, their membership would be revoked, but there was general agreement that customers would not be reported to the police on account of the associated administrative burden.

Additional impediments to reducing the flow of stolen goods were identified in relation to the inconsistency of access to information contained on property databases. Some retailers reported compiling a repository of information of all items sold to their company and their sellers, which they shared with the police for free. Some suggested that they had basic data-sharing agreements with other companies, but these were generally interpreted as being inconsistent and difficult to establish. Beyond this, the barriers faced by second-hand retailers in accessing property databases was understood as a key limitation in their response to stolen goods markets. The subscription costs of many property databases were viewed as prohibitive, meaning that the checks made against goods by retailers are often partial, and ultimately, ineffective. Moreover, the lack of consistency between the databases used across commercial and public institutions was understood to further compound this issue.

In relation to second-hand retailers, there appear to be three key areas where improvements can be made. In the first instance, the democratization of access to, and homogenisation of searches made on, property databases, is key to ensuring that second-hand stores

can more effectively check on the provenance of goods. In the second instance, reconsideration of the requirements made of those looking to sell goods must be a central focus of any attempt to address neighbourhood acquisitive crime. These requirements must not only become more stringent but also ought to be standardised across all outlets. Finally, to facilitate the standardisation of the wider policies and procedures surrounding the sale of second-hand goods, consideration of greater legal regulation offers a means of ensuring the efficacy of any measures implemented. The We Don't Buy Crime scheme offers a promising model for the standardisation of guidance in this regard, but its impact would be greatly enhanced by stronger legislative underpinnings which would provide the legal basis to mandate engagement from retailers.



Serious Organised Acquisitive Crime and Neighbourhood Offending

The men who took part in research interviews were prolific offenders with sustained criminal histories. However, their accounts indicated that they were not organised criminals and none were known to be part of mapped OCGs. Nevertheless, the stories that they offered of their offending suggest that their offences, at times, overlapped with the world of organised crime, principally through the disposal routes used for the goods they stole. As outlined above, this link was clearest in relation to stolen vehicles whereby offenders would either sell to, or steal on behalf of, individuals who were able to buy and dispose of significant numbers of vehicles. These individuals were known to commission large numbers of thefts, had access to relevant technology to facilitate theft, and were thought to have links to international disposal networks. It is also possible that those who were involved in the disposal of electrical goods and more expensive watches and jewellery also had links to organised crime. It was also notable that the vast majority of these individuals were known to have links to the drug trade, often being involved in drug supply themselves.

Given the limited insight that interview data was able to offer into the extent to which organised criminality is involved in the neighbourhood acquisitive crime problem, a request for data was made to police forces and ROCU's. Whilst far from offering a complete national picture, given the low response rate, the data returned indicated a number of issues worthy of consideration. In the first instance, a number of forces currently had no OCGs or Priority Individuals flagged for their involvement in SOAC/ SAC, and this was undoubtedly reflective of their force priorities rather than of the nature of the crime problem they faced. In the second instance, a

number of forces flagged a number of OCGs and PIs who had been mapped for their perpetration of neighbourhood acquisitive offences, indicating that neighbourhood acquisitive criminality has a fairly significant organised element which needs to be understood more fully. Vehicle thefts formed the vast majority of the neighbourhood offences perpetrated by organised crime groups. These crimes involved robberies for vehicles, two-in-one car key burglaries and running chop shops. A number of other OCGs were also mapped for the perpetration of residential burglaries which principally focused on the theft of car keys, luxury watches and Asian Gold. The OCGs involved in these activities were flagged as having significant links to drug supply and were known to use international disposal goods, including the use of shipping containers to move vehicles out of the country. This data indicates, therefore, that there are significant links between OCG activity and neighbourhood offences, but an accurate assessment of the extent of these links is difficult to make given that many forces fail to prioritise acquisitive offending. A more thorough assessment of the extent and nature of this relationship ought to form the basis of further enquiry given that tackling this form of criminality will have very different implications for policing.



Key Recommendations



The Creation of Key Learning Resources for Police Forces

Several key aspects of the project's findings are likely to be of salience to numerous areas of policing. It is therefore imperative that the research and its implications are communicated with relevant policing bodies including neighbourhood policing teams and key portfolio holders. Information for dissemination is likely to take three main forms encompassing key research findings in relation to disposal routes, summaries of best practice and support with the technicalities of policing stolen goods markets. Recent use of Safer Streets funding to develop PCPI training resources in relation to vehicle identification, offers a very useful model which might be replicated across different commodity types though these resources could be designed and created within the College of Policing. The development of training videos which offer guidance in relation to the identification of bicycle frame numbers, tool serial numbers, and instructions on how to search relevant databases are likely to be very useful in supporting officers to identify and recover stolen goods. The development of accompanying pages on Knowledge Hub (or equivalent) which could be promoted via relevant portfolio leads are also likely to be of benefit.



Marking and Registration Events for Existing Property

A number of very successful marking and registration initiatives for bicycles have been implemented by police forces. Using a mixture of private and public sponsorship, forces have hosted events to offer local residents access to these services for free. Learning from these initiatives unequivocally indicates the importance of hosting in-person events where police or commercial groups complete the process of marking and registration on behalf of bicycle owners. The mere provision of resources and information has been found to be both ineffective and wasteful as members of the public fail to complete the process. The extension of these events across police forces would complement the introduction of marking and registration schemes for new bicycles by ensuring that a greater number of existing bicycles are also marked. There is also potential to extend this approach to tools through participation between local forces and tool merchants. Significant scope also exists for the incorporation of marking and registration at key commercial points such as when products are serviced or repaired. Expressions of interest were offered by both tool and bicycle merchants about hosting these events as they were considered to have a positive impact on both brand reputation and customer footfall. The development of these events might be a subject for consideration at future roundtable events.



Improvement of Intelligence Generation

For acquisitive crimes occurring outside the organised crime arena, interview data unequivocally evidences the importance of local handlers in the distribution of stolen goods. The existence of complex informal networks which often have links to local drug supply serve to sustain the sale of stolen goods on a daily basis. The longevity of many of the relationships detailed in interview data indicates the long careers of many of these handlers and hints at the possibility that they operate under the radar of police attention. Much is to be gained from understanding more about the identity of these handlers and their networks. Some interview data suggests the likelihood that these handlers have links to wider criminal networks and to organised crime activity. The mapping of these networks therefore has potential to elucidate potential links between neighbourhood acquisitive offences and wider forms of organised criminality. The ability to do so, however, is dependent on the generation of much better intelligence. At present, the generation of such intelligence is not routinely a priority in force level responses to neighbourhood acquisitive crimes. An initiative implemented by Gwent Police's 'We Don't Buy Crime' team suggests that the deployment of covert assets may be a promising means of beginning this work. The distribution of covert commodity targets including bikes, motorbikes, cars, vans, tools and electronics have resulted in the identification and arrest of offenders in 84% of asset activations. Through their work, the team have been able to begin to map the contours of handling networks in their force area. The intelligence generated by this scheme has facilitated the identification of geographical areas and addresses used as hubs for stolen goods and of nominals previously unknown to police. Funding to purchase covert assets for other force areas would be of enormous value in facilitating the extension of this approach.



Improvement of Operational Responses to Acquisitive Crime

Placing greater emphasis on the generation of better intelligence packages around acquisitive crime and its perpetrators, is likely to facilitate the formulation of more effective operational approaches to acquisitive crime. At present, policing responses to acquisitive offences are not without issue. Often, the scale of police response fails to match the gravity and complexity of the crime it addresses. This issue manifests in multiple ways at both local force, and national, level. In the first instance, because of the pressure of competing demands, many ROCUs fail to prioritise and map acquisitive offences, despite significant evidence of widespread of OCG involvement in these activities. Whilst the continued demands of high-harm criminality will inevitably draw resources away from acquisitive crime, the development of better intelligence around the links between, for example, drug supply, organised theft and distribution networks and acquisitive neighbourhood crimes may offer opportunities for operational responses capable of impacting upon these arenas simultaneously. At force level, evidence suggests that officers often lack the resources, knowledge or leadership to equip them to respond appropriately when acquisitive crime involves an organised element. The creation of networks capable of providing guidance and support to local forces with cases which entail SOAC activity is very important. There is potential for OPAL to provide support through the creation of intelligence forums, but the success of such an approach is dependent on improving awareness of OPAL's role at force level. However, either through the creation of operational co-operative responses like those used in the South West, or through greater ROCU support, this also needs to be supplemented with operational support for forces so that the current gaps in policing structures which facilitate organised criminality can be closed.



Standardisation of Engagement with Second-Hand Retailers

A significant proportion of the goods stolen by the perpetrators in the research were sold to local independent jewellers, second-hand stores and pawnshops. Establishments of this nature play a very important role in ensuring the profitability of crime by allowing offenders to monetise their assets. Police engagement with, and better regulation of, these retailers is therefore essential. Building on models first implemented in the scrap metal industry, Gwent's WDBC team have introduced guidance for second-hand retailers which encourage compliance with procedures capable of reducing the number of stolen goods moving through these outlets. In recognition that levels compliance with these procedures will vary between companies, the WDBC model involves a rag rating system which necessitates more intensive police oversight of those establishments which fail to meet requirements. The extension of this approach would undoubtedly be of value as standards between companies and across geographical areas vary enormously. Resources to facilitate the transfer of knowledge from Gwent Police to forces nationally would be essential in achieving this. However, given the current inconsistencies in the interpretation and application of guidance, and compliance with best practice frameworks, consideration of the formulation of national regulatory requirements would also be beneficial in this regard.



Delivery of Database Search Mechanism

The issues of product marking and registration were key to discussions around reducing the profitability of criminality in key commodity markets, namely bicycles and tools. However, the success of such initiatives is dependent on key stakeholders having access to relevant databases in the event of theft. These stakeholders include bodies such as the police, second-hand retailers, online sales portals and potential buyers. Given the complexities of introducing a centralised database, it is likely that the need to access information from multiple sources will continue. Ensuring the accessibility of this information is therefore essential, and the homogenisation of information from multiple repositories through the application of API software appears a promising solution. Recent attempts to develop this technology have formed the basis of discussions between police, DfT and Sustrans. Any support offered to these discussions, and the subsequent development and application of APIs to property databases, is likely to have a significant impact on the ease with which stolen goods can be sold, identified and recovered. Moreover, the extension of recent pilots which have incorporated API searches of property databases into online sales listing processes is also worthy of consideration in order to reduce the saleability of stolen goods and to secure the genuine empowerment of consumers.

USERNAME

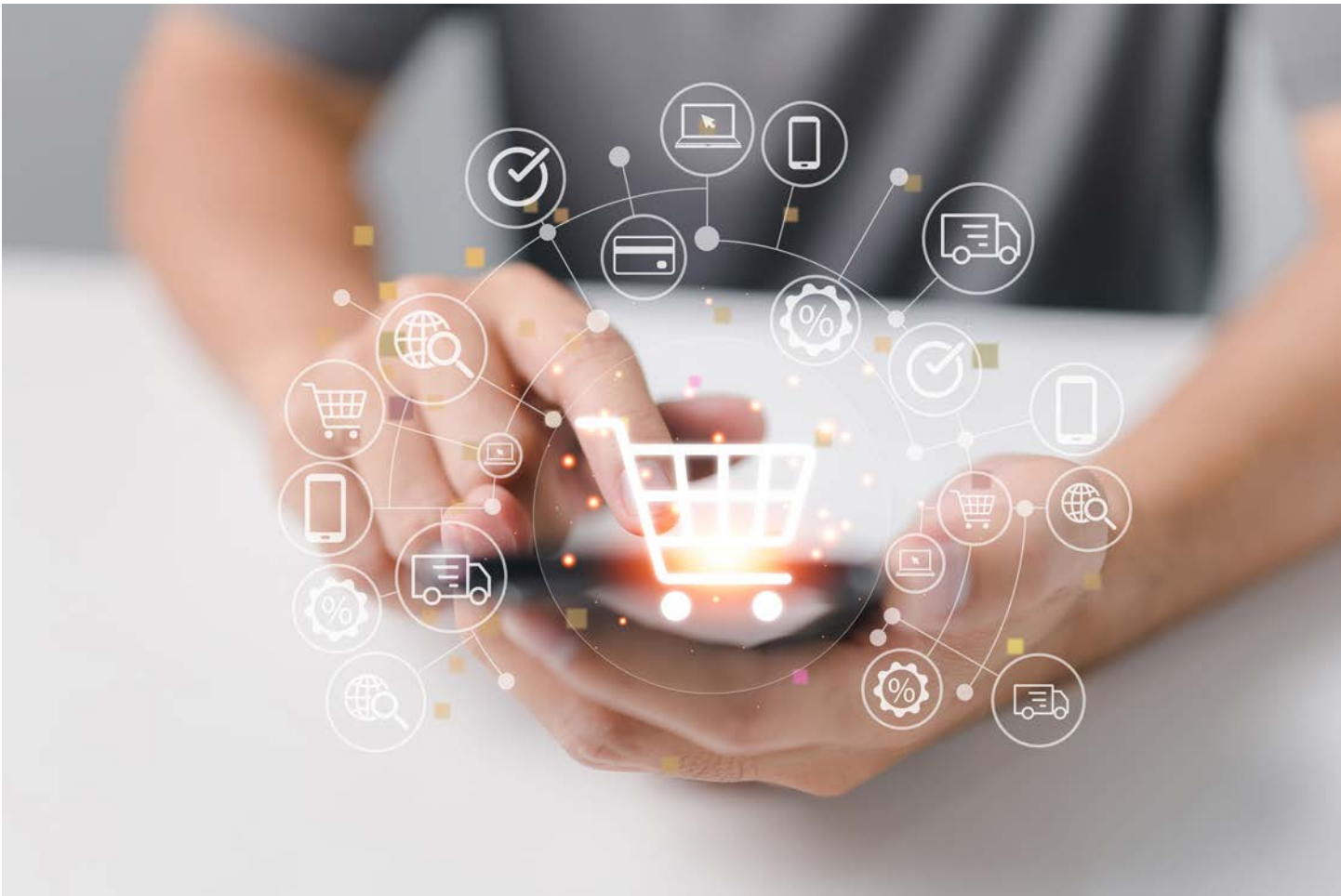
PASSWORD

LOGIN



Standardisation of Marking and Registration Requirements in Key Commodity Markets

The widespread application of marking and registration procedures were identified as being key to achieving change in the commodity markets for bicycles and tools. The implementation of marking and registration procedures is understood as having the potential to improve the identification of stolen goods, increase recoveries and to reduce the ease with which stolen goods might be sold in the first instance. The perspectives offered by research participants indicate that the registration of goods might be most effectively located at the point of sale, whilst marking is likely to be most easily achieved at the point of manufacture. Discussions with industry are pivotal to achieving consensus around these issues and to ensure sector-wide compliance. However, requirements around registration and marking cannot be implemented in isolation. Rather, in order to ensure their efficacy, they must be considered as part of a suite of requirements alongside other recommendations relating to police training, the development of database access, and changes to minimum requirements for information in sales listings.



Minimum Requirements for Goods Listed Online

The ease with which stolen goods can be listed online is one of the key facilitators of stolen goods markets, particularly in relation to key commodity types. More specifically, mainstream online sales platforms operate as principal outlets for stolen bikes, tools and vehicle parts and accessories, and reconsideration of the listing requirements associated with these items offers a potential means by which to reduce the flow of illicit goods through these channels. The requirement to include key pieces of information in adverts, such as serial numbers, or frame numbers has the ability not only to increase the difficulty with which stolen goods can be listed and increase the ease with which they can be identified, but also may serve to empower consumers to avoid purchasing stolen goods. Crucially, the inclusion of API software linked to stolen property databases in adverts is likely to be of central importance in allowing consumers to check on the provenance of goods, and discussions with industry around how this might be achieved appear crucial to moving forward in the attempt to reduce the flow of stolen goods online.



More Stringent Regulation of the Sale of Goods Used in the Perpetration of Crime

Data relating to the theft of vehicles highlights the role of key technology types in the facilitation of crime. Many of these items have no legitimate purpose and should be the focus of more stringent regulation, particularly in the context of online sales.



Creation of Commodity-Focused Roundtables

In order to effectively address the sale of stolen goods, stakeholder engagement from across government, police and the commercial sector is required. Reforms of manufacturing and commercial practices are key to achieving change in many sectors, and a better understanding of industry-specific facilitators and inhibitors of change are essential to meeting these targets. An abundance of best practice exists within industry which may serve as the basis of potential commercial reforms, but their wider implementation is often impeded by the presence of complex commercial dynamics present within particular sectors. As part of the research, a number of industry representatives have expressed interest in participating in discussions around these issues, and the creation of thematic roundtables around specific commodity types should therefore be used to explore the details of achieving universal participation to deliver industry-wide reforms.



Introduction of Minimum Requirements for the Insurance of Key Commodities

Within specialist insurance markets, efforts to incentivise responsible ownership have been trialled. Policies which require the adoption of minimum-security standards or the registration of goods, however, appear to be confined to those offering tool or bike specific policies. However, the vast majority of items continued to be insured under mainstream home or vehicle policies and thus fall outside of these requirements. There is therefore potential for the creation of a working group to examine the details of insurance policies and to consider the introduction of requirements to improve the security measures adopted by individual policy holders and to mandate the collation of key pieces of information at the point that policies are issued.



Further Research

Given the research's specific focus on neighbourhood offending, the extent to which it has been able to consider the role of OCG activity in acquisitive crime has been limited and this ought to form the basis of future work. A thorough assessment of the SOAC threat in relation to neighbourhood crime is required as neither data at force level, nor ROCU level currently captures this. Engagement with nominals involved in this level of criminality would be of enormous value in addition to greater exploration of overseas markets in stolen goods exported from the UK. The findings from the current research indicate that there is significant overlap between organised criminality, neighbourhood acquisitive crimes and the disposal routes for stolen goods, however, the extent and nature of these links requires further elucidation.