



**POLICE
SCOTLAND**

Keeping people safe

POILEAS ALBA

North East

CRIMEALERT

Keeping Communities in the North East Safe



SEPTEMBER 2026



Welcome to the September 2026 edition of North East Crime Alert.

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

In this edition of North East Crime Alert:

Learn about the working being undertaken across Deeside to encourage responsible outdoor access.

Students across the North East arrive at Universities and Colleges for Freshers' Week.



Website

www.scotland.police.uk



Twitter

www.twitter.com/NorthEPolice



Facebook

www.facebook.com/NorthEastPoliceDivision

The Scam Van visits Banff.

Guidance on legal and illegal electric bikes and scooters.

Remember to lock your vehicle as the nights get longer.

Advice on the best locks for your bicycle.

Dine and Dash - advice for food outlets.

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

Police and Rangers Work Together
to ensure Summer Outdoor Safety





During the summer season Police Scotland once again worked hand-in-hand with local countryside rangers on Deeside to ensure our natural habitats remain safe, beautiful and protected for everyone.

Joint Patrols across Key Visitor Hotspots

Throughout the busy summer months, officers and conservation staff carried out joint patrols across popular rural locations, including the Mar Lodge Estate, Cambus O'May and the Muir of Dinnet National Nature Reserve. These targeted weekend and late-night patrols were designed to support local communities, protect delicate ecosystems and engage directly with the public.

While the vast majority of visitors treat the countryside with respect, a small minority engage in anti-social behaviour, improper waste disposal and irresponsible behaviour while camping. The collaborative approach allowed officers and rangers to address these issues swiftly while educating the public on the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Zero Tolerance for Barbecues and Campfires

A major focus of this year's summer initiative was enforcing the seasonal fire byelaw across the Cairngorms National Park, which prohibits campfires and barbecues from April 1 to September 30. Breaching this rule carries a maximum fine of £500.

Especially dry summer conditions have meant that even a single stray spark from a disposable barbecue or campfire can trigger a catastrophic wildfire.

Uncontrolled fires leave lasting scars on peatlands, destroy vital wildlife habitats and threaten local infrastructure.

The new byelaw enabled police officers to support rangers in stamping out illegal fires and issuing penalties where necessary.



'Our joint patrols with the ranger service are all about engaging with the public, offering friendly advice, and ensuring that everyone can enjoy the stunning Deeside landscape safely. The response from the vast majority of visitors has been overwhelmingly positive. People appreciate having officers and rangers on hand to help them understand the outdoor access code and the vital importance of keeping our countryside free from the risk of wildfires.'

*PC Ann Ashman
North East Division Wildlife Crime Officer*



Enjoying the Outdoors Responsibly

Police Scotland and our partner ranger services want everyone to enjoy a fantastic, memorable experience when exploring Deeside.

The **Scottish Outdoor Access Code**, underpinned by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, gives the public statutory rights to access most land and inland water for recreation, education and passage. Operating on three core principles - respecting others, caring for the environment and taking personal responsibility - it applies to non-motorised activities like walking, cycling and wild camping.

A common misconception is the use of the phrase 'right to roam.' While widely used, it is legally inaccurate and misleading. The phrase implies an absolute, unconditional freedom to wander anywhere at will. In reality, Scottish law provides a *right to responsible access*.

These rights are conditional. They do not apply everywhere; exclusions include privacy zones around houses, farmyards, schools and fields with growing crops. Furthermore, users must behave responsibly - keeping dogs under control near livestock, avoiding damage and closing gates. If access is exercised irresponsibly, those rights cease to apply. Therefore, calling it a 'right to roam' overlooks the strict legal balance between public enjoyment and the operational needs and privacy of landowners.

Practicing Responsible Behaviour

Leave No Trace

Always pack out what you pack in. Litter left behind not only ruins the landscape for others but poses a severe threat to wildlife that can ingest or become entangled in rubbish.

Fire Safety

During dry spells or restriction periods, leave portable stoves, barbecues and campfires at home. Open flames can quickly spiral out of control, causing catastrophic wildfires that devastate habitats.

Heed Local Guidance

Pay close attention to advisory signs and listen carefully to instructions from rangers on the ground, as they monitor immediate environmental risks and changing weather conditions.

Respecting Others

Respecting those who live and work in the countryside is a cornerstone of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. Rural areas are not just recreational spaces; they are vibrant working environments and homes. Visitors must be mindful of local livelihoods by not blocking access gates, keeping dogs under proper control around farm animals and livestock to prevent stress or injury and avoiding interference with farming operations, machinery or forestry work.

Showing consideration for privacy means staying at a safe distance from houses, gardens and operational farmyards. By recognising that visitors share these landscapes with rural communities, the public can help maintain a harmonious balance between outdoor recreation and the daily lives of those who manage and care for the land.

By working together, we can all prevent devastating wildfires, safeguard wildlife and preserve the breathtaking beauty of Deeside for generations to come.

If you spot an unattended fire in the countryside, please report it immediately by calling 999.

Retail
Crime
TASKFORCE



Think you're **ANONYMOUS?**

We're sharing information. Connecting the dots.
We're catching retail criminals.

Retailers and police now share intelligence to
identify repeat offenders and organised groups.

Every piece of evidence is now connected
through a national intelligence network, linking
incidents and identifying offenders.



#NotAVictimlessCrime #RetailCrimeTaskforce

Welcome to University

Freshers Week and Student Safety





Officers from North East Crime Reduction and Equality & Diversity Teams have been speaking to new students at universities and colleges across the region during 'Freshers Week.'

Starting university or college is an exciting milestone, filled with new independence, friends and experiences. Police Scotland wants to ensure your fresher year is memorable for all the right reasons. To help you settle in safely, we have put together some essential advice on protecting your property, staying safe on nights out and navigating your new surroundings.

Securing Your Accommodation and Belongings

Moving into halls or a shared flat means sharing space with new people, which requires a collective effort toward home security.

Lock Up

Always lock your doors and windows when you leave your room or flat, even if you are just stepping out for a few minutes. Never prop open communal security doors or let strangers tailgating behind you into your building.

Mark Your Property

Register your valuables - such as laptops, tablets and phones - on property database schemes. Avoid leaving expensive gadgets in plain view near ground-floor windows.

Bicycle Security

If you bring a bike, invest in a heavy-duty, Sold Secure-approved D-lock. Always lock both the frame and wheels to a secure cycle rack. Consider registering your bike with 'Bike Register.' It's free and if the worst should happen may increase the chances of getting your bike back.

Staying Safe on Nights Out

Freshers' week involves plenty of socialising, but balancing fun with personal safety is vital.

Plan Your Journey

Stick with your friends, look out for one another and pre-book reputable, licensed taxi firms or check local public transport routes home. Avoid walking home alone late at night through unfamiliar or unlit areas.

Know Your Limits

Excessive alcohol consumption lowers your guard, impairs your judgment and can leave you more vulnerable to crime. Pace yourself and keep an eye on your drinks.

Consent Matters

Under Scots law, consent cannot be given if someone is incapacitated by alcohol or drugs. Always respect personal boundaries.



Visit www.scotland.police.uk/advice/student-safety-hub for further advice

Making Scotland a Better Place for Everyone

Everyone has the right to live, study and work free from discrimination. If you experience or witness discrimination - whether based on race, religion, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation or any other protected characteristic - it is important to report it. Speaking up helps protect you, supports others who may be affected and allows Police Scotland to take action against unacceptable behaviour.

Discrimination can take many forms: verbal abuse, exclusion, harassment or physical intimidation. Even if you are unsure whether an incident is a crime, you can still report it.

You can report discrimination to Police Scotland or through a Third Party Reporting Centre, such as universities or community organisations, if you prefer not to contact police directly.

Protecting Your Finances Online

Cybercriminals frequently target students with phishing emails, fake loan updates or housing scams.

Be cautious when clicking links in unexpected emails claiming to be from your bank or HMRC and never share your passwords or verification codes.

One of the most prevalent threats is phishing and smishing, where criminals send fake emails or text messages pretending to be from the Student Loans Company, SAAS or HMRC. These messages often

claim there is an urgent issue with your funding or a tax rebate waiting, pressuring you to click a link and hand over sensitive banking details.

Accommodation fraud is another major risk, particularly in competitive student cities. Scammers post fake property listings on social media or classified sites, offering cheap rent. They demand an upfront deposit before you have viewed the flat, only to vanish once the money is transferred, leaving students stranded without a home.

Students should also watch out for 'money mule' schemes, where criminals use social media or fake job postings to recruit students to receive and transfer illicit funds through their bank accounts. This is illegal and can lead to criminal convictions.

Finally, international students are often targeted by scammers impersonating the Home Office or police, threatening visa cancellation or arrest unless immediate fines are paid. Always verify unexpected requests through official university support services or directly via trusted channels.

Staying safe as a fresher is all about looking out for yourself, your flatmates and your new community. By staying alert to online scams, securing your personal belongings and keeping a lookout for one another on nights out, you can focus on what really matters: your studies, making lifelong friends and enjoying everything your university experience has to offer.



Guidance on Electric Bikes and E-Scooters

Police Scotland is reminding the public about the laws surrounding electric bikes and electric scooters to ensure everyone stays safe and keeps within the law when using local roads and paths.

Understanding the laws surrounding electric bikes and scooters is crucial because these vehicles are often mistaken for simple toys, when in reality, legal classifications can treat them as motor vehicles.

Electric Bikes

Legal e-bikes (classified as Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles, or EAPs) can be used on public roads and cycle paths without a licence, tax or insurance, provided they meet specific criteria -

The rider must be 14 years of age or older.

The bike must have working pedals that can propel it.

The electric motor must have a maximum power output of 250 watts (continuous max rated power).

The motor must automatically cut out when the vehicle reaches 3.7mph without pedalling (throttle/walk assist) and 15.5mph with pedalling (pedal assist).

If an e-bike exceeds these limits it is legally classed as a motor vehicle or motorcycle and requires the correct drivers licence, vehicle insurance and a crash helmet to be worn.

Thumb Throttle / Twist and Go Throttles

Thumb throttles can either be purchased already fitted to the bike or adapted at a later date. Most companies who sell throttles will add a disclaimer clearly stating the restrictions.

There is one exemption for throttles and that is throttles that assist without pedalling up to a maximum of 3.7mph are legally allowed, in essence this means only starting throttle assistance is allowed. This is to assist people with injuries/disabilities who are unable to push off when sitting on the bike. The throttle **MUST** cut out after 3.7mph.



Electric Scooters (E-Scooters)

Privately owned e-scooters are illegal to ride on public roads, pavements, cycle paths or public spaces (such as parks and shopping centres) across Scotland.

They are classified as Personal Light Electric Vehicles, but because they cannot currently be insured for public road use, they cannot be legally ridden outside.

E-scooters may only be used on private land with the explicit permission of the landowner.

Enforcement and Safety

Officers across Scotland routinely monitor public spaces. Anyone found using a non-compliant electric bike or riding a private e-scooter in a public place risks having the vehicle seized and removed by police, alongside potential fines and penalty points.

Police Scotland urges the public to check vehicle specifications carefully to prevent costly confiscations and protect the safety of pedestrians and other road users.

If you are buying an e-bike or e-scooter, please check its specifications to ensure it complies with legal requirements.

If you already own one that does not meet these standards, you must keep it off public roads to avoid penalties and avoid risking the safety of others.

Visit www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code

The online version is fully searchable and covers all the rules for pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and other road users, along with up-to-date guidance on road safety, signs and legal requirements.

Lock Check Secure

Protecting your Vehicle as the Nights Draw In



As evenings get darker earlier across the North East, Police Scotland is issuing an important reminder to local residents regarding vehicle and home security.

Regrettably, officers continue to see opportunistic thieves targeting vehicles across the area. A significant portion of these incidents involve vehicles that have been left completely unlocked. Criminals are known to walk down residential streets checking door handles, looking for an easy target. By taking a few simple precautions, you can drastically reduce your chances of becoming a victim of crime.

Lock It Every Time

The single most effective defence against vehicle crime is locking your car. Never rely on habit alone - always double-check that your doors are locked and your windows are completely closed, even if the vehicle is parked on your own driveway. Make it a routine to check your car before heading inside for the night.

Remove All Valuables

Thieves are often drawn to everyday items left on display, such as mobile phones, cash, electronics, sunglasses, tools and work equipment.

Take all valuables with you when you leave your car. Do not hide them under a seat or in the glove box, as thieves know to look there.

Some drivers choose to leave an empty glove box or centre console open to show potential thieves that there is nothing inside.

If you are out shopping, avoid returning to your car to drop off bags on the seat before heading back out to the shops.

Choose Secure Parking

As daylight hours shorten, parking location matters even more. Whenever possible, choose a well-lit, busy area rather than a dark, secluded street. If you are parking in a public car park, look for sites with a Park Mark safer parking accreditation. These accredited car parks have been thoroughly vetted and vetted for security measures designed to keep vehicles safe.

Keyless Vehicle Theft

As vehicle technology evolves, so do the methods used by criminals. In recent years, police have noted an increase in 'keyless entry' also known as 'relay theft.' This technique targets modern vehicles equipped with keyless fob systems. Criminals use electronic relay devices - often working in pairs - to intercept, amplify and mimic the wireless signal emitted by your key fob from outside your home. Even if your key is safely stored inside your house, the device tricks your car into believing the key is right next to the door, allowing thieves to unlock, start and drive away in a matter of seconds without ever needing physical access to the key.

Protect your Vehicle from Relay Crime

Use a Faraday Pouch

Store your key fob (and spare fobs) inside a signal-blocking pouch, often referred to as a Faraday bag or wallet. These specialised containers block the wireless signal, preventing criminals from amplifying it.

Turn off Fob Signals

Some modern key fobs allow you to completely turn off the wireless signal feature at the push of a button or a double-click. Check your vehicle's manual to see if your fob has this capability.

Block the Signal at Home

Keep your keys well away from doors, windows and exterior walls where a thief might walk past with a relay scanner. Storing them toward the centre of the house adds an extra layer of protection.

Physical Deterrents

Consider using traditional physical security measures, such as a steering wheel lock or a driveway parking post. These remain highly visible and effective visual and physical deterrents that can stop thieves in their tracks, even if they manage to bypass your electronic security.

Home Security as Autumn Approaches

The change in season and longer nights also signal a need to review your home security. Opportunistic thieves look for dark corners and easy entry points.

Keep boundaries secure

Ensure side gates, back doors, and garden sheds are securely locked at night. Tools left unsecured in a garden can easily be used by a thief to force entry into a home or vehicle.

Lighting and timers

Consider installing dusk-to-dawn security lighting or use automatic timer switches for indoor lights to make your property look occupied during the longer evenings.

Keep keys safe

Never leave car keys or house keys near the front door or within reach of a letterbox where they can be fished out. Keep them safely tucked away out of sight.

By working together and staying vigilant, we can keep the North East safe this autumn.

If you witness any suspicious behaviour around vehicles or properties, please report it to Police Scotland on 101, or always dial 999 in an emergency.



Protecting Our Communities

The Trading Standards 'Scam Van'



Fraud and doorstep crime continue to pose significant challenges to communities across Scotland, targeting vulnerable residents and utilising increasingly sophisticated tactics. To combat this, Police Scotland partners with Trading Standards Scotland on the national #ShutOutScammers campaign. A central feature of this initiative is the mobile 'Scam Van,' which tours towns and cities nationwide to engage directly with the public, provide practical education and build community resilience.

Taking the Fight Against Fraud to the Streets

The Scam Van serves as a visible, accessible hub where local residents can speak face-to-face with community police officers and Trading Standards professionals. Rather than relying solely on digital warnings or printed leaflets, the initiative brings expert advice directly to high-footfall areas like supermarket car parks and town centres.

The primary objective of the tour is empowerment. The campaign aims to educate consumers rather than frighten them, ensuring that people of all ages know how to spot the warning signs of financial crime. Visitors to the van receive specialised guidance on how to identify rogue traders, handle aggressive cold callers and protect themselves against the mis-selling of household goods and energy efficiency measures. Furthermore, teams provide valuable tools - such as advice on call-blocking technology to deter nuisance phone scams - helping households secure their personal spaces.

Highlighting the vital role of these community visits during a recent visit to Banff, Inspector Claire Smith emphasised the importance of direct engagement: 'Our community officer used the scam van to speak with local residents and provide advice on how to avoid being defrauded through the many types of scams – often online, by phone or even in person. Fraudsters are targeting everyone in our communities, not only the elderly and vulnerable. Everyone is at risk.'

Why Staying Aware of the Latest Scams Matters

Scammers are constantly adapting their methods, shifting from traditional doorstep tactics to sophisticated online and telephone schemes. Modern fraudsters often pose as legitimate businesses, government bodies, or utility providers, utilising persuasive language and polished materials to trick unsuspecting victims.

Staying Informed is Vital

Protecting Financial Well-being

Financial scams can result in devastating losses for individuals and families, wiping out savings accumulated over a lifetime.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Neighbours

Awareness helps community members look out for one another, especially elderly or isolated residents who are frequently targeted by rogue doorstep traders.

Disrupting Criminal Networks

When local residents report suspicious behaviour or attempted scams promptly, it provides the police with critical intelligence needed to track down offenders and shut down fraudulent operations.

Working Together to #ShutOutScammers

Combating financial crime requires a collective community approach. Police Scotland strongly encourages residents to remain vigilant, question unsolicited offers and never feel pressured into making hasty financial decisions on their doorstep or over the phone.

If you or someone you know has fallen victim to a scam, report it immediately. You can contact Police Scotland on 101 (or 999 in an emergency) and report consumer fraud advice concerns to Advice Direct Scotland on 0808 164 6000.



**POLICE
SCOTLAND**

Keeping people safe

POILEAS ALBA

FRAUD... THE BASICS

The North East Crime Reduction Team would like to speak to your community group about frauds and scams.
If your organisation would like to learn about -

Spotting Frauds and Scams

Strong Passwords

Keeping Your Device Safe

Banking Online Safely

Wi-Fi Security

Social Media Safety

Get in touch by emailing
NorthEastCrimeReduction@scotland.police.uk

STAY SCEPTICAL - STOP AND THINK - COULD THIS BE A SCAM?



Bicycle Security

Lock It or Lose It

Cycling is a healthy and enjoyable way to travel, but unfortunately, bicycles remain a common target for thieves. This month officers from the Crime Reduction Team have been attending bike events across the region encouraging cyclists to take proactive steps to protect their bikes. By following these guidelines, you can significantly reduce the risk of theft and increase the chances of recovery if your bike is stolen.

Choose the Right Lock

Secured by Design (SBD) recommends using locks that meet recognised security standards, such as Sold Secure Gold or Diamond ratings. A high-quality D-lock combined with a robust cable or chain lock offers strong protection. Using two different types of locks can deter thieves, as it requires more tools and time to break them.

Lock Your Bike Correctly

Always secure your bike to a fixed, immovable object that is anchored to the ground and cannot be easily cut or lifted. Lock both the frame and at least one wheel, ideally the rear wheel, as it is more expensive to replace. Position the lock so it is difficult for tools to be inserted and position the lock off the ground to prevent leverage attacks.

Park in Safe, Well Lit Areas

Whenever possible, use designated cycle parking facilities that meet SBD standards. These are designed to resist tampering and are often located in areas with good natural surveillance, CCTV coverage and lighting. Avoid leaving your bike in isolated or poorly lit locations, such as stairwells, especially overnight.

Mark and Register Your Bike

Marking your bike with a unique identification number and registering it with a national database such as BikeRegister greatly improves the chances of recovery if it is stolen. SBD approved marking kits are tamper resistant and visible acting as a deterrent to thieves.

Remove Accessories

Quick-release saddles, lights, GPS units, e-bike batteries and wheels are easy targets. Take them with you when leaving your bike unattended.

Secure at Home

Many bike thefts occur from sheds, garages and communal storage areas. Use a ground anchor or wall-mounted bracket with an SBD approved lock to secure your bike indoors. Ensure doors and windows are fitted with high security locks and consider installing an alarm or CCTV system.

How to Choose The Right Lock

Buying a bike lock should not be an afterthought. In the UK, the average cost of a bike is approximately £500 and an e-bike can cost anything between £1,000 up to £10,000 so it is important to use the best protection possible.

Buying a cycle lock which has not undergone an approved security test, is just not worth it. A quality lock is one that has been accredited with the Police Preferred Specification.

An accredited bike lock will act as a strong deterrent to any thief.





Use Quality Locks

Invest in high-quality locks that are independently tested and resistant to cutting tools. Remember to secure your bike at home as well as when travelling with a van or car.

Avoid leaving your bike unattended if it is attached to the outside of your car or van.



Secure the frame and wheels

Always lock both the frame and wheels to a fixed, immovable object.

If you are leaving your bike inside a van, make sure it is completely out of sight from the outside.

Consider securing your bike to an anchor that is firmly fixed through the body of your van.



Register Your Bike

Register your bike's frame number with a national bike registration database to help police trace stolen bikes.

www.bikeregister.com



I have a high value e-bike how do I protect it?

If you have a high value bike consider buying the highest rated security product which has the Sold Secure Diamond rated approval.

SBD insist on security standards for cycle security products with the aim of reducing and preventing the theft of bikes. Various test methods are used to determine resistance against attack using the sort of tools that a thief may use to steal a bike.

Buying and using a single SBD approved product with a high-security rating will provide better protection than using two untested products.

Whether you are cycling in a city with good provision of cycle parking, out cycling with the children in a country park with no cycle stands to lock your bike, or on a mountain biking trail in a national park, you need to choose the right type of lock for the activity and situation. Style, weight, and security grade will all be a factor.

Bicycle security is about layers of protection. The more effort and time it takes to steal your bike, the less attractive it becomes to a thief. By following Secured by Design principles and staying vigilant, you can enjoy your cycling with greater peace of mind.

 Sold Secure Pedal Cycle Bronze Ideal if you leave your pedal cycle for a short time in a low risk area like popping into a local café. Pedal Cycle Bronze locks are typically lightweight and easy to carry to deter the opportunist thief.	 Sold Secure Pedal Cycle Silver A good grade if you've got a lower value pedal cycle and/or you're leaving it in a medium risk area such as your local town centre. Usually the minimum grade insurers ask for when insuring a lower value pedal cycle.	 Sold Secure Pedal Cycle Gold Best if you have a high value pedal cycle and/or you keep your pedal cycle in a high-risk area like a big city or university town. Typically the minimum grade insurers ask for when insuring higher value pedal cycles.	 Sold Secure Pedal Cycle Diamond Our highest grade aimed at very high value pedal cycles kept in very high-risk areas such as major city centres. This grade of approval is designed to resist determined cycle thieves.	 Sold Secure Powered Cycle Gold Designed to protect your powered cycle (motorbike, e-bike etc.) to the highest level, both at home and when you're out and about. Robust locks with a high level of resistance against the dedicated thief.	 Sold Secure Powered Cycle Diamond Our highest level of security for powered cycles providing resistance against extra determined attacks. Great if you're looking for an extra level of security, perhaps if you live or work in a high risk area such as a major city.
---	--	---	---	--	---



Dine and Dash

Advice for Food Outlets

Police Scotland is urging restaurant, café and pub owners to remain vigilant against a growing trend of '*dine and dash*' incidents. This type of fraud occurs when customers consume food or drink and deliberately leave without paying. While it may seem like a petty offence, its impact on small businesses, staff morale, and community trust can be significant.



The Impact on Businesses

Dine and dash is not a harmless prank - it is theft. For independent venues, even a single incident can wipe out the profit from an entire day's trade. Beyond the financial loss, these incidents can cause distress to staff, disrupt service and damage the reputation of an otherwise welcoming establishment. Repeat offences can also lead to increased insurance costs and heightened security expenses.

Common Tactics Used by Offenders

Offenders often work alone or in groups, using distraction techniques to avoid payment. These can include:

- Leaving one person at the table while others 'step outside for a smoke' and never return.
- Creating a disturbance to divert staff attention.
- Claiming a sudden emergency and rushing out.
- Tampering with food to dispute the bill and demand a waiver.

Some offenders are highly organised, targeting multiple venues in a short period.

Legal Consequences

Under Scottish law, dine and dash is a criminal offence. Offenders can face arrest, prosecution, fines and even imprisonment. Police Scotland treats these incidents seriously and encourages all victims to report them promptly.

Prevention Tips for Restaurant Owners

Train Staff

Ensure all team members know how to spot suspicious behaviour and handle it safely.

Use Technology

Consider CCTV coverage, table tracking systems and point-of-sale alerts.

Payment Policies

Request payment in advance or consider card pre-authorisation for large groups or high value orders.

Table Management

Keep an eye on customers who move around frequently or appear unsettled.

The 'Last Drink' Rule

Present the bill when the final item is served.

Community Awareness

Share information with neighbouring businesses about recent incidents or suspicious individuals.

Reporting Incidents

If a dine and dash occurs, do not confront offenders physically. Record descriptions of individuals and any vehicles. Preserve any CCTV footage.

Contact Police Scotland immediately via 101 or 999 in an emergency.

Finally

Dine and dash is not just a loss of money - it's a crime that undermines the hard work of Scotland's hospitality sector. By staying alert, working together and reporting incidents promptly, we can protect our businesses and ensure our communities remain safe and respectful places to dine.

Purchase Scams



Purchase scams happen when criminals trick people into paying for goods or services that do not actually exist. These fraudulent offers are frequently promoted through social media platforms, online marketplaces, or fake websites designed to look like legitimate businesses. Criminals often lure buyers in by advertising popular items - such as high-end electronics, event tickets, pets or vehicles - at heavily discounted prices.

Once a buyer shows interest, scammers will often create a false sense of urgency, claiming the deal is time-limited or that other buyers are interested. They then convince the victim to pay via direct bank transfer rather than using the secure payment methods provided by official retail platforms. Once the money is sent, the criminal cuts off all communication and the goods never arrive.

How to Avoid Purchase Scams

Stick to Secure Payment Methods

Always use the official payment service recommended by the website or platform you are using. Avoid direct bank transfers to strangers, as these offer very little protection if things go wrong.

Research the Seller

Check the seller's rating, feedback history and how long their account has been active. Be very wary of newly created accounts with generic, overly positive reviews.

Watch Out for 'Too Good to Be True' Deals

If an item is priced significantly lower than its market value, approach with caution.

Verify Websites

Check web addresses carefully. Scammers often use cloned websites with tiny spelling variations to mimic genuine brands.

The Scenario

A person searching online for a pet (such as a puppy or kitten) finds an advertisement on a social media platform or online marketplace featuring pictures of cute animals at a reasonable price.

The buyer contacts the 'seller,' who claims they are selling the animal due to a sudden change in circumstances. To make it sound urgent or emotional, the scammer might say they just want the pet to go to a good home.

Because other buyers are supposedly interested, the scammer convinces the victim to pay a deposit or the full price immediately via a direct bank transfer rather than a secure platform.

Once the initial money is sent, the scammer invents a new problem - claiming they need extra cash for urgent vaccinations, specialised pet travel crates or insurance.

As soon as the second payment is made, the seller stops responding, deletes their profile and blocks the buyer. The pet never existed.

If you believe you have fallen victim to a purchase scam, contact your bank immediately and report the incident to Police Scotland on **101**.

Keeping Our Communities in the North East Safe

Police Scotland's North East Division covers rural and urban areas in Moray, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City. The division has five territorial command areas which have their own dedicated Area Commander, who is responsible for the daily policing function. Each command area is served by a number of community policing teams whose activities are built around the needs of the local community. These teams respond to local calls and look for long term solutions to key issues. They are assisted by the division's Crime Reduction Unit who deliver against

Force and local priorities in a number of areas, including physical and social crime prevention, supporting and enhancing community engagement and creating and sustaining strong and effective partnership working.

Website

www.scotland.police.uk

Twitter

www.twitter.com/NorthEPolice

Facebook

[www.facebook.com/
NorthEastPoliceDivision](https://www.facebook.com/NorthEastPoliceDivision)

North East Division Crime Reduction Team

Moray

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

Aberdeen City

PC Steph Strange
stephanie.strange@scotland.police.uk

Aberdeenshire

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



**POLICE
SCOTLAND**

Keeping people safe

POILEAS ALBA