

Business Crime Analysis Brief



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Summary

Business crime is one of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner's priorities. It is thought that shoplifting offences are on the increase and with businesses using the internet more to run their business, business crime is thought to be increasing. Overall, between April and August 2014, there have been 2,586 business crime offences recorded in Warwickshire, the second highest when compared to the same period of 2011 where 2,699 business crime offences were recorded, which was the highest number of offences recorded of this offence type. When looking at the levels of business crime since April 2010, business crime has reduced. However, this type of crime could be under-reported to try and protect businesses so they are not seen to be vulnerable in an attempt keep clients with them and gain new clients. However, recent figures show that business crime has started to increase since April 2014 with August 2014 experiencing the third highest recorded number of business crime offences recorded in Warwickshire since April 2010 with 575 recorded offences.

Definition — Warwickshire and West Mercia Police use the ACPO¹ (Association of Chief Police Officers) definition of business crime: "Any criminal offence that is committed against a person or property that is motivated by the connection of that person or property to a business."

Victims - A victim of business crime can be any type of business or person or property which has been a victim of a crime, whether it is a shoplifting offence or a burglary or robbery in a shop, or even businesses that have been a target of a cybercrime.

Offenders - An offender of a business crime can be an employee of that business, or an offender who has targeted that business to commit a shoplifting/burglary or robbery offence.

This is the sixth in a series of local crime briefings, with the idea adapted from the Jill Dando institute (JDi) of Security and Crime Science briefings, sourced from www.ucl.ac.uk/jdibrief/homepage.

¹ ACPO - <http://bit.ly/1oIHVzc>

What is business crime?

Warwickshire and West Mercia Police define business crime using the ACPO definition²: “Any criminal offence that is committed against a person or property that is motivated by the connection of that person or property to a business.”

Businesses can also be targeted via the internet with offenders targeting small and large businesses; therefore also falling under the category of cybercrime should a business be a victim of this type of offence.

What is going on nationally?

The Office for National Statistics published a document in June 2013³ which included results of a commercial victimisation survey they had undertaken in 2012 aimed at businesses. The survey asked businesses if they had experienced any type of crime in the previous 12 months. Results reveal that almost half (46%) of respondents had experienced a crime at their place of business in the time period.



Where a burglary took place, goods or stock were the most common item taken by offenders accounting for 37%.



Where a robbery (including attempted robbery) took place, 91% said that it took place at the business premises, where again goods or stock was the most common item stolen (38%) however in 35% of cases, the offender was not successful.



The most common type of assault or threat to the business was from the customer, accounting for 80% and employees were physically injured in 12% of cases.



Results also found that 64% experienced vandalism to the premises.



Where fraudulent activity was reported via credit/debit/store cards, half of these frauds were made up of “fraud by persons unknown” and one third was made up from “fraud by others”. Skimmed takings and fraudulent accounting by employees accounted for 34% and 30% respectively.

² ACPO - <http://bit.ly/1oIHVzc>

³ Home Office Report - <http://bit.ly/1oILjU>



In theft offences, 88% of goods or stock was taken by customers, of which 94% were from the wholesale and retail sector.

Who are the victims?...

A victim of business crime can be any type of business or person or property which has been a victim of a crime, whether it is a shoplifting offence or a burglary or robbery in a shop, or even businesses that have been the target of a cybercrime.

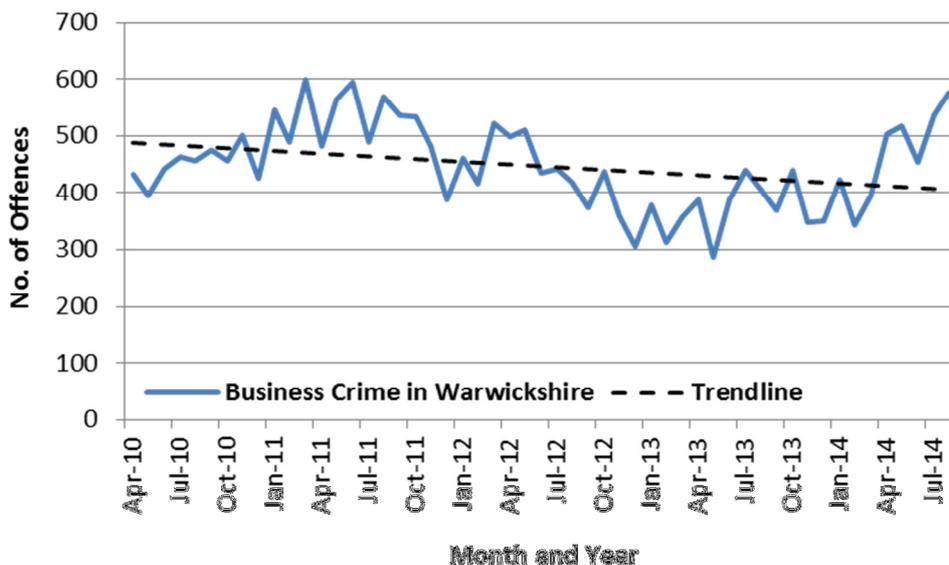
... And who are the offenders?

An offender of a business crime can be an employee of that business, or an offender who has targeted that business to commit a shoplifting/burglary or robbery offence.

So what's happening in Warwickshire?

When looking at the levels of business crime since April 2010, the graph below shows that overall, business crime has reduced. However, this type of crime could be under-reported to try and protect businesses so they are not seen to be vulnerable in an attempt keep clients with them and gain new clients.

Recent figures show that business crime has started to increase since April 2014. The month of August 2014 has seen the third highest recorded number of business crime offences recorded in Warwickshire with 575 recorded offences, whereas the previous highest offences were recorded in March and June 2011.



CRIMES, iBase System, Warwickshire Police

Overall, between April and August 2014, there have been 2,586 business crime offences recorded in Warwickshire, the second highest when compared to the same period of 2011 where 2,699 business crime offences were recorded, which was the highest number of offences recorded of this offence type. The lowest number of offences seen was between April and August 2013 with 1,909 offences recorded. Shoplifting has historically been the main type of offence recorded since 2010 and between April and August 2014, this type of offence accounted for 40% of all business crimes. This was followed by all other theft offences accounting for 24%.

Breaking the data down further, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough experienced the highest level business crime, accounting for 28% of all business crimes recorded in Warwickshire. Followed by Warwick District accounting for 23%, Stratford District accounting for 21%, Rugby Borough accounting for 17% and North Warwickshire Borough, 12%.

Shoplifting offences have increased between April 2013 and March 2014⁴ in three of the four areas in Warwickshire when compared to the previous year 2012/13, with the exception of North Warwickshire Borough which saw a reduction of 6%. Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough experienced the largest increase in shoplifting offences of 40%, followed by Rugby Borough with an increase of 27% and South Warwickshire an increase of 6%. Recent figures (April to June 2014) indicate that shoplifting offences are increasing in all district and boroughs when compared to the same period of 2013.

When looking at where Warwickshire compares in its most similar group, Warwickshire ranks first out of eight most similar areas indicating that shoplifting is not as prevalent as other areas similar to Warwickshire (where first is equal to good performance), closely followed by Wiltshire.

In the alliance, Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police, have devised a business crime strategy⁵ which aims to help tackle business crime by targeting offenders of business crime, working with partners and using crime prevention techniques.

Furthermore, a Warwickshire Rural and Business Crime Task and Finish Group has been set up with the first meeting soon to take place in October 2014. Here representatives from Warwickshire Police, Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, local councils and business contacts, such as BID (Business Improvement District) Managers and Chamber of Commerce will be present and discussions and action plans will be conducted in an attempt to tackle business crime in Warwickshire.

An Action Fraud Roadshow took place in Stratford-Upon-Avon in September 2014 which was aimed at small businesses on how they can protect their businesses from cybercrime attacks. Specialists from Action Fraud (the UK's national fraud reporting and internet crime reporting centre) were in attendance as well as representatives of City of London Police and Get Safe Online. The roadshow was sponsored by Ron Ball, Warwickshire's Police and Crime Commissioner, and supported by Warwickshire and West Mercia Police.

⁴ iQuanta (June 2014)

⁵ Business Crime Strategy - <http://bit.ly/1sRqUae>

How can I protect my business from being victimised?

Warwickshire Police have devised a list of things a business can do in an attempt to protect themselves from being a victim of a business crime. To see the full list please click on the link: <http://bit.ly/1qaR9Vm>. Some of these include:

- ! Have a procedure in place to ensure every window and door of the premises is locked at night.
- ! Keep all keys in a secure location.
- ! Have a procedure in place for setting burglar alarms.
- ! Ensure valuable items are not left out overnight and that they are placed in secure storage.
- ! Do not leave cash floats in tills overnight.
- ! Do not leave valuable items by windows that can be easily stolen.
- ! Ensure all computers, monitors, printers and photocopiers are marked and secured to desks.
- ! Make sure any computer has "firewall" software installed on it and "anti-virus" software is up to date.
- ! If possible have a CCTV system which complies with the Data Protection Act and regularly check the quality of the images collected.

Business Watch⁶ has been set up by Warwickshire Police. Once you join you can receive alerts where individual businesses are sent messages by telephone, fax, email or text about crime and suspicious incidents, so you can be aware of recent and local crimes against businesses in order to help protect your own business.

Warwickshire Retail Crime Initiative (WRCI) is a Partnership approach to prevent and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in retail business premises in Warwickshire and has been established since 2001. At the time of writing (September 2014) there are 292 members, of which 208 are retail members and 84 licensed premises members in Warwickshire. It works by partnership members identifying prolific offenders of crime and ASB and sharing this information. WRCI business crime advisors, together with Warwickshire Police then provide target packages with offender photographs and information that have been banned under the scheme from entering certain premises. There are two schemes, one daytime and one night time. The day time scheme for retail members ensures that prolific offenders are identified to all members and allows for early identification of them by the use of back to back radios between members, Police and the CCTV control room, which results in the prevention or disruption of further offending in member stores, with persistent offenders being banned from member stores. The night time scheme puts in place a strong control mechanism around member premises and town centres in order to prevent and

⁶ Warwickshire Police Business Watch - <http://bit.ly/1uQwCKs>

reduce violent crime and anti-social behaviour, again with persistent offenders being banned from member stores.

For businesses, the government launched Cyber Essentials⁷ in April 2014, which is the first recognised cyber security certification, as part of the National Cyber Security Strategy which guides businesses into protecting themselves from cybercrimes and threats. It is free to use and once completed and successfully independently assessed or tested through the schemes assurance framework, Cyber Essentials a certification badge will then be awarded to show customers of that business that they have taken measures to defend themselves against cyber-attacks.

Useful Links

- ❖ **Warwickshire Police – How to Prevent Business Crimes:**
<http://www.warwickshire.police.uk/crimeprevention/businesscp/PreventBusinessCrimes>
- ❖ **Warwickshire Retail Crime Initiative:**
<http://www.warwickshire.police.uk/crimeprevention/businesscp/WRCIhomepage>
- ❖ **Get Safe Online for Businesses:**
<https://www.getsafeonline.org/businesses>
- ❖ **Business Crime Reduction Centre**
<http://www.bcrc-uk.org>
- ❖ **National Business Crime Solution**
<http://www.nationalbusinesscrimesolution.com/about-nbcs>

⁷ Cyber Essentials - <http://bit.ly/1p8RBWZ>