

**CrimeStoppers.**

Spring 2024

# Connections

Giving people the power to speak up and stop crime

## **MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

The views of police chiefs on our charity's growing significance

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## **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

Crimestoppers' closer alliances with similar schemes abroad

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## **CRIME CORRESPONDENCE**

Reflections of a Sky News journalist on fugitives and Most Wanted

# Offering hope through anonymity

How Crimestoppers supports people, communities and businesses

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# Crimestoppers – A trusted link between the public and the police

Welcome to the 6th edition of Crimestoppers' Connections where our partners share their experience of working with our charity to make communities and companies safe.



With decades of experience, Crimestoppers has come of age and is more respected than ever before by those who rely on our service.

When I reflect on the early days of Crimestoppers, it was something of a patchwork quilt of a service with a mixture of police, volunteers and a small number of staff answering calls across the country on an ad hoc basis.

That was back in the 1980s and 90s when I, along with key police, business and media people of like mind, had a vision of giving people an option to report crime anonymously.

## A national approach

Today, Crimestoppers has matured into an agile, well-trusted and independent charity.

Our central UK Contact Centre ensures a consistent quality service is available 24/7, 365 days a year.

We work with the police – closely. But we are not the police – a message that we know for millions of people is the reassurance they need to step forward and name the murderer, give the location of a fugitive, weapons or drugs store, or pass on their fears over domestic or child abuse. Our primary focus is always with our beneficiaries: the brave people who, under difficult circumstances, want to do the right thing.

## Grassroots representation

Along with our HQ and Contact Centre staff, we benefit from having national and regional managers who liaise with law enforcement, councils, companies and

public sector bodies who need our support to clamp down on crime and wrongdoing. We also have a fantastic youth team (Fearless), plus a network of hundreds of local volunteers who ensure we stay relevant and reach those who need us.

Encouraging people to spell out what they know about crime – whilst staying completely anonymous – is key to our success.

I hope you enjoy this selection of varied articles and thank you again for your continued interest in our charity.

**Lord Ashcroft KCMG PC**  
Founder and Chair of Crimestoppers



**“Today, Crimestoppers has matured into an agile, well-trusted and independent charity. Our central UK Contact Centre ensures a consistent quality service is available 24/7, 365 days a year.”**

# Bursting the bubble of secrecy and silence

With more than 2,000 people trusting our charity every single day, Crimestoppers has an established expertise at breaking down barriers.

Thanks to our impenetrable anonymity guarantee, people rely on Crimestoppers. Without us, they might have stayed silent.

## Quality reports rising

In recent months, we have reached a landmark of more than 200,000 pieces of information each year being passed on to all forces, National Crime Agency and key partners. These are high quality reports and can be uniquely important or corroborate and confirm what investigators have already found.

## Sharing the burden safely

The information we share with police and commercial partners helps tackle crime and wrongdoing in workplaces and neighbourhoods.

I'm immensely proud when I regularly hear positive feedback from our law

enforcement and commercial partners who directly benefit from our work. They say the information we are able to give them makes an incredible difference.

Our beneficiaries help burst the bubble of secrecy that criminals rely on.

## Expanding our reach

Finally, I hope you find time to browse the stories in this edition. The articles include contributions from our international partner CSI; a candid thought piece from one of TV's leading crime reporters; and stories about our role in keeping young people safe. We highlight our campaigns and initiatives with business partners tackling counterfeiting, County Lines and other pressing crime problems.

We also learn about inspiring work across Scotland and our Community Ambassador programme.

Please remember our charity when there are opportunities to spread the word and thank you for your continued support. We all benefit when we work together.



**“The information we share with police and commercial partners helps tackle crime and wrongdoing in workplaces and neighbourhoods.”**

**Mark Hallas OBE**  
Chief Executive of  
Crimestoppers



# Why Crimestoppers makes an incredible difference

Tonya Antonis, National Police Chiefs' Council lead for Crimestoppers, discusses our charity's role in supporting police work.

Central to the policing mission is to make communities safer. How? By upholding the law fairly and firmly, preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, keeping the peace, protecting and reassuring communities, investigating crime, and ultimately, bringing offenders to justice.

Achieving this has never been more challenging, and therefore the help and support we receive from Crimestoppers is absolutely invaluable.

As the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Lead for Crimestoppers (and Durham Constabulary's Assistant Chief Constable), I see first-hand the incredible difference the charity makes.

In 2023, Crimestoppers disseminated – or passed on – over 200,000 reports to police forces across the country, supporting and speeding up crime investigations, preventing abuse and harm, and helping to locate fugitives and ensure justice is served.

## Finding fugitives

The Most Wanted campaigns are amongst some of the most successful and are used by the majority of law enforcement bodies across the country.



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Tonya Antonis, NPCC's lead for Crimestoppers

It's an invaluable tool that the public – with over half a million website views each year – has embraced. Their information ensures those wanted for crimes varying from fraud and serious sex offences to drug-related crime and murder are caught and held to account.

The anonymous information Crimestoppers receives helps us successfully identify, locate, and arrest offenders – we couldn't

achieve these results without the public and their support.

## Calling out corruption and abuse

You may have read in a recent Connections edition that the Metropolitan Police commissioned Crimestoppers to run their Anti-Corruption and Abuse Hotline.

Due to the success of the Met hotline, police forces across the country have asked for the same service to cover the whole country. This is another step as the police build trust and confidence with communities.

Following a competitive tender process, Crimestoppers has recently been awarded a contract to provide this service to all 43 police forces in England and Wales. This national service should be up and running in early 2024, giving communities a safe, trusted, anonymous way of reporting actions and behaviours that have no place in modern policing.



# Forging alliances with Crimestoppers initiatives across the world

Hayley van Loon, Deputy CEO of Crime Stoppers International (CSI), shares her thoughts after a recent trip to Crimestoppers UK.

CSI is recognised globally as the most trusted, independent link between citizens wanting to anonymously share information about criminal activity and the appropriate international law enforcement authorities.

CSI is the non-profit umbrella organisation for an extensive global network of accredited national and local Crime Stoppers programmes operating across Canada, the USA, Latin and South America, the Caribbean, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific and growing programmes in Asia.

## Different but united

In the autumn of 2023, representatives from Australia, Canada, South Africa, and the small island of Micronesia in the western Pacific Ocean visited Crimestoppers' London headquarters and national Contact Centre. This visit provided an opportunity to observe UK practices and exchange ideas on

sustaining anonymous crime reporting. The following day saw CSI's Annual General Meeting, during which Mick Duthie, Director of Operations at Crimestoppers UK, was elected as Vice President of the CSI board.

In December, I also had the privilege of meeting with the UK Crimestoppers team and witnessing the operations of the national Contact Centre. I was impressed by the team's high level of professionalism, courtesy and dedication.

Crimestoppers UK holds charitable status and, like numerous Crime Stoppers programmes worldwide, functions independently from the police. The organisation's autonomy from law enforcement remains a crucial and distinctive feature of Crime Stoppers programmes, offering individuals an anonymous platform to come forward, fostering reports that might otherwise go undisclosed.



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**Hayley van Loon,**  
Deputy CEO of  
Crime Stoppers International



Crime Stoppers International (CSI) Board visit  
Crimestoppers UK Head Quarters

## CSI tip line

A recent partnership between Crimestoppers UK and CSI has led to the handling of CSI tips by the capable UK-based Contact Centre. Individuals desiring to report crimes anonymously on the CSI website can now submit their information globally through an online form, which is then assessed by the Crimestoppers UK Contact Centre and subsequently passed to the relevant jurisdiction.

At its core, the fight against crime and the pursuit of safer communities and nations necessitates a collective endeavour. Global cooperation brings about benefits both at home and abroad. We express our gratitude to crucial partners like Crimestoppers UK and are thoroughly impressed by their operational excellence. We look forward to a lasting and collaborative relationship.

# Reflections of a crime correspondent

Martin Brunt, crime correspondent at Sky News, on working with Crimestoppers and chasing fugitives

Crimestoppers and my Sky career were born around the same time, but only one of them is flagging and beginning to look a bit frayed around the edges. Unlike a TV reporter, the charity seems to improve with age and has had, in my view, one of its most effective years.

Significant evidence in the chilling murder of Liverpool schoolgirl Olivia Pratt-Korbel emerged through Crimestoppers and helped nail the conviction of an arrogant killer who thought he was untouchable.

The biggest ever reward persuaded witnesses, reluctant to talk to the police, to come forward and do the right thing: the simple principle on which Crimestoppers was founded.

## Anonymous donor

I met and interviewed the anonymous businessman whose belief in the charity's work prompted a huge, generous reward matched by Lord Ashcroft's own financial commitment, that rose to a record combined £200,000.

With great clarity, the private donor explained what encouraged him to act: "I understand people's reluctance to speak out and I've thought about my own safety in

putting up the reward. Like others, I had doubts and worries, but Crimestoppers assured me my identity would be protected. The bottom line is that this was horrific, the murder of a young girl. It doesn't come much worse than that."

I don't know whether the reward was paid out or even claimed, but most of them aren't.

## A rewarding relationship

Rewards do, though, drive publicity, which is where crime hacks like me come in, and I readily admit that my long relationship with Crimestoppers has been happy and fruitful.

I wish I could say the same about my dealings with certain police forces who these days tend to treat journalists as a threat rather than an asset; a ludicrous situation.

Today, with poor public confidence in policing, the charity's work in encouraging people to speak up has never been more needed.

## Hunting fugitives abroad

Crimestoppers has always been one of the important organisations on the radar of a crime reporter.

But it wasn't until someone called me and asked, "would you like to cover the launch of a Most Wanted campaign, Operation Captura...but you'll have to spend a couple of days in Spain", that I really appreciated the charity's work.



Lord Ashcroft, Crimestoppers Chair and Founder with guest speaker Martin Brunt, crime correspondent for Sky News

On foreign assignments, reporters prefer to pack suncream, rather than thermal underwear, in their suitcase.

Thankfully, British fugitives rarely go and hide anywhere below 20 degrees. Hot sun, cold beer is the golden rule.

I soon discovered our viewers love to play detective, and media coverage of these Most Wanted appeals – a joint venture between Crimestoppers and the National Crime Agency – really did make a difference.

When Operation Captura concluded, 87 of the 95 fugitives featured had been caught or surrendered and were later extradited. A winning combination: justice, victim satisfaction and a good detective story.

**Martin Brunt, Author: No One Got Cracked Over the Head for No Reason: Dispatches from a Crime Reporter**

"I readily admit that my long relationship with Crimestoppers has been happy and fruitful. I wish I could say the same about my dealings with certain police forces."

**Martin Brunt,**  
Crime correspondent, Sky News

# New technology used to find Most Wanted murder case fugitive

At the time of publication, Derek Ferguson remained wanted in connection with the murder of Thomas Cameron outside a public house in Bishopbriggs, Scotland 16 years ago. An international warrant remains in place for his arrest.

As part of the continuing investigation to find him, Crimestoppers offered a reward of up to £10,000 for information leading to his arrest. Intelligence about Ferguson's possible appearance now was created, using innovative new technology.

Police Scotland's Fugitive Active Search Team (FAST) worked with Professor of Forensic Psychology Professor



EvoFIT images of Most Wanted fugitive Derek Ferguson

Charlie Frowd at the University of Central Lancashire, to generate images of Ferguson using EvoFIT software appearances, based on ageing and health, to create a short-animated sequence.

Professor Charlie Frowd created EvoFIT, a recognition based facial-composite system, which has helped find criminals wanted for the most serious crimes worldwide.

Fugitive Ferguson is described as between 5'2" and 5'6" in height, with a small scar on his right jaw line and a small piece missing from the top of his left ear. He was known to have various tattoos on his forearms, including a heart and dagger.

## Biggest successful disaster recovery test in Crimestoppers history

The ability of any organisation to withstand a crisis and to be able to recover quickly following an unforeseen critical incident is paramount.

In the autumn of 2023, Crimestoppers ran one of the most comprehensive Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery tests in its 35-year history. These are designed to ensure we are resilient in the event of an unexpected event, such as a power outage or having to evacuate our main headquarters.

The test involved shifting staff to an alternative backup site. Impressively, our UK Contact Centre was up and running – taking calls and processing online forms – within 60 minutes.

Ultimately, the test showed our charity is robust enough to continue taking and passing on vital information to our police and business partners.

There are always learnings after such an emergency simulation. However, it's reassuring to know that following this successful disaster recovery test, Crimestoppers is stronger and more robust.



## Fearless team who do so much to help keep children and young people safe

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Catherine Roper, National Lead for Children and Young People at the NPCC, reflects on the impact of Crimestoppers and Fearless.

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to give information in a completely anonymous way, which is then passed on to police for action.

### Not snitching, but life-saving

Information given to Crimestoppers and Fearless has saved lives, and I would like to thank all of those courageous young people who have acted to protect others. This is often very difficult, and on the Fearless.org website there is a really helpful link highlighting the difference between snitching and reporting.

I encourage children and young people, and indeed trusted adults and professionals, to view the website. It makes clear the distinction and helps encourage young people to do the right thing.

In summary, I would like to commend the work of Crimestoppers and especially the Fearless team. They do so much to help keep children and young people safe.

Your work is vital and supports policing to deliver the service the public rightly expects.



It is my pleasure to provide an article for Connections, supporting Crimestoppers' invaluable work to get information that helps prevent crime and keep us all safe.

I am privileged to lead Wiltshire Police as Chief Constable, but I pen this article in my role as the National Lead for the Children and Young Persons Portfolio. It is essential that policing plays a pivotal role in keeping children and young people safe.

Developing trust and confidence across policing, our stakeholders, partners, communities – and especially our children and young people – is essential. I have the

honour to work nationally to ensure the voices of children and young people are heard and represented at all levels in policing. The intelligence and information provided by our communities is essential to make sure we can tackle harmful criminality, and protect people and communities from being exploited and preyed upon by ruthless and harmful criminals.

### Improving trust

We know, and understand, that children and young people may not always feel confident about approaching police officers to give information. We are working on this and there are now a number of ways the public can make contact, especially in the digital online space.

I want to encourage the use of Fearless.org (the youth service of Crimestoppers) which provides young people the opportunity



## Highlighting the truth about knife carrying in Hampshire

Hampshire's young people were the focus of a Fearless campaign to highlight and challenge some myths about knife crime.

The fact is that carrying a knife increases your chances of being hurt and can lead to a five-year prison term – even if it isn't used.

The campaign coincided with and complemented the national police Operation Sceptre knife crime campaign and ran throughout Hampshire and the Isle of Wight over a three-week period.

Its main aim was to help reduce knife crime in the county and increase intelligence on knife crime to pass on to police, alongside promoting our 100% anonymous reporting option.

### Appeal to make a hard call

There were four elements including a Fearless social media campaign on Snapchat and Instagram, aimed at 14–17-year-olds. This was complemented by a Crimestoppers social media campaign



# 183%

rise in the number of information reports on knives and bladed weapons compared to the same period the year before

targeted at the wider adult population to encourage them 'to make a hard call' if they were concerned about a young person carrying a knife.

In addition, a Fearless online training session for professionals working with young people was organised.

The successful campaign saw a significant rise (183% increase) in the number of information reports on knives and bladed weapons compared to the same period the year before.

The campaign also resulted in a general increase in crime reports being passed to Hampshire Constabulary from Crimestoppers during the three-week period.

The media release generated an exceptional amount of coverage, with TV interviews taking place on BBC South Today, Greatest Hits Radio Surrey and East Hampshire and BBC Radio Solent, which gave 1.5 million opportunities to hear about our Crimestoppers campaign.

# ‘London calling’ for Youth Volunteer of the Year

One of our young Fearless volunteers who recently scooped the Youth Volunteer of the Year award received a special invitation to Westminster after a local MP heard about his exceptional efforts.

For Logan, who was 15 years old at the time, this was his first visit to London and to the Palace of Westminster.

After a long journey from Glasgow by train – upgraded to First Class by Avanti – Logan and a chaperone arrived at the gates of the world-famous building.

## Order, order

Once through security, they took their seats for Prime Minister’s Questions. Many MPs were spotted, among them Labour leader Keir Starmer, Mhairi Black, Deputy leader of the SNP, and the majority of the Cabinet, including Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

After PMQs, Logan met with Alison Thewliss MP for a tour, before being treated to lunch on the famous Members Terrace overlooking the River Thames. Logan had the opportunity to talk to Alison about his volunteering with

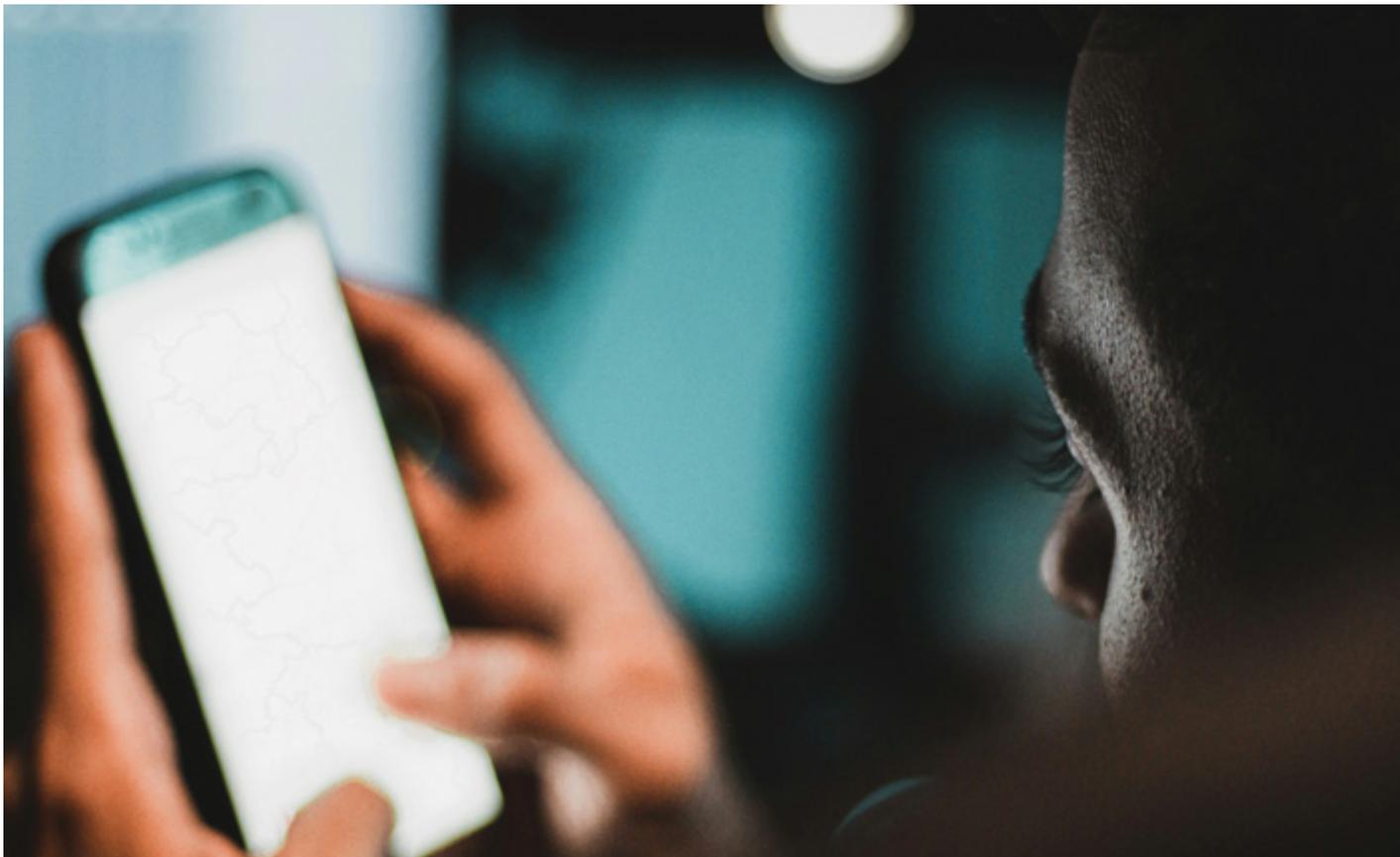
Fearless and the difference that it’s made to his life.

Following a brief and unexpected chat with LBC’s Andrew Marr, it was sightseeing time – the London Eye, Downing Street, Horse Guards Parade, Buckingham Palace – before heading home to Glasgow on a very late train.

Volunteering has so much potential to develop a young person’s aspirations and this trip was a wonderful example of how that can be achieved.



Logan, Fearless volunteer, with Alison Thewliss MP



## Powerful mapping tool helps Crimestoppers visualise how ‘everything happens somewhere’

Every hour of every day, people with information about crime contact our charity in the hope of making a difference.

The amount of information we are given voluntarily in any 24-hour period is substantial. It's essential that locations relating to all tip-offs are as accurate and detailed as possible.

### A visual and valued partner

That's why we are proud to partner with ESRI. Their specialist software enables us to utilise the 'science of where'.

With around 2,000 people contacting Crimestoppers each day, their information must be plotted or mapped to ensure it's passed to the correct law enforcement agency and/or police force.

ESRI mapping allows staff at Crimestoppers to drill down into very specific targeted areas to look at the crime reporting picture. This

is especially helpful when assessing how effectively our campaigns and appeals have performed and identifies new and emerging crime trends.

### Pinpoint tech

Without ESRI technology, this would be a resource intensive manual task that would also be considerably less accurate.

The pin records the longitude and latitude coordinates of where a crime is taking place or has previously occurred. With over 600 reports being sent to law enforcement every day, it's crucial that we record the details of the incident (not the person contacting us) accurately and securely. We can access the data to provide valuable insights for our partners. In particular, these saved coordinates help us understand the impact of our local campaign work, which is driven by our Regional Manager colleagues around the country.



“ESRI’s mapping tool is a fundamental component in the operation of our busy 24/7 Contact Centre and has had a powerful impact in speeding up and making our processes more streamlined. This means we can support more people than ever to pass on what they know about crime.”

**Louise Peers, Head of Contact Centre Services, Crimestoppers UK**

# Partners against crime: Using technology integrations to drive societal change

Mark Balaam, CEO and Founder of imabi, sheds light on the Railway Guardian app putting safeguarding front and centre.

At imabi, we've designed a first-of-its-kind platform that offers users real-time actionable support, as well as the ability to report crimes and access essential supportive materials and services — all within one place.

Whether it's reporting cases of bullying through our school-specific platform, or informing the British Transport Police about harassment on the trains through its Railway Guardian app (powered by imabi) — our technology can, and is being, adapted to make a difference in all corners of society. With more than 500,000 downloads across our entire imabi ecosystem, we are making significant strides in our mission to offer prevention, education and empowerment.

## Crimestoppers integration

In November, we were delighted to announce our partnership with Crimestoppers, seeing its anonymous reporting function seamlessly integrate with our existing platform. We are now able to offer users a trusted way to speak up when they witness a crime, without the need to speak directly to law enforcement.

At imabi, a core part of our offering is anonymity, as people often want to be reassured that whatever they report — be that crimes or inappropriate, antisocial behaviours — is genuinely anonymous and of no risk to themselves. This is why our partnership with Crimestoppers is the perfect meeting of minds that will further empower users to speak up and make a difference to themselves and others.

## Quick exit function

Another layer of confidence is offered by Crimestoppers' signature 'quick exit' function, which instantly reverts users to a blank search page — which could prove essential in a challenging situation. What's more, access will be via a link in the imabi platform that will take users directly to the Crimestoppers reporting page, but without switching to a separate browser — leaving no record in browser history.

Railway Guardian has proved an essential service for rail users, allowing them to report unwanted behaviours on the rail network in England, Scotland and Wales and support the British Transport Police. Crimestoppers' reporting function has also been integrated within this app, highlighting the impact of collaboration within the space and offering another great opportunity to further contribute towards a safer society for all.



**“Given the risks, there’s never been a more important time to raise awareness. That’s the aim of a brand-new campaign rolled out in partnership with broadcasters, rights owners, law enforcement bodies, charities such as Crimestoppers and the Intellectual Property Office.”**

**Mark Balaam,**  
CEO and Founder of imabi



**Partners  
against Crime:**  
Using technology  
integrations to  
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change.

# Peoplesafe and Crimestoppers pledge to enhance personal safety

Naz Dossa, CEO of Peoplesafe, discusses working with Crimestoppers to address the growing need for enhanced safety measures.

Driven by the common goal of tackling the broader issue of personal safety, the partnership introduces campaigns and initiatives aimed at creating a culture where everyone can feel secure in their daily lives. By amplifying awareness and tackling crime at its source, both organisations aim to empower individuals and foster a safer, more secure environment for all.

As part of this initiative, Peoplesafe, in conjunction with Crimestoppers, launched the 'Step Up. Stay Safe.' campaign, urging employers to safeguard their most valuable asset – their people – wherever they are and whenever they need help. This campaign is dedicated to raising the bar on personal safety inside and outside the workplace.

## Step Up. Stay Safe.

Driven by the core message that everyone has the right to return home safely after a day's work, 'Step Up. Stay Safe.' encourages open conversations about safety, endorses safety policies, and promotes the use of personal safety technology. Key objectives of the campaign

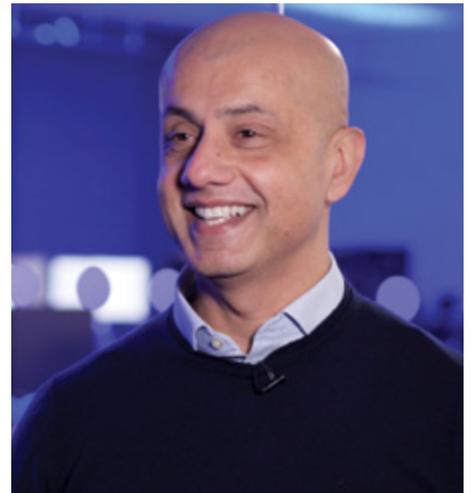
include raising awareness of safety tips, enhancing employee skills in responding to safety risks, and reducing the frequency of personal safety concerns.

As part of the campaign, employers are invited to sign the 'Step Up. Stay Safe.' pledge which outlines specific actions they can take to enhance personal safety within their organisations, such as providing personal safety training, offering personal safety technology to all staff, fostering a personal safety culture, and actively promoting awareness of safety tips.

Becoming a Pledge Partner demonstrates a commitment to safety and signals their dedication to supporting personal security, encouraging positive behaviours inside and outside of working hours, and raising awareness among employees.

## Regional and outreach workers protected

In parallel, Peoplesafe supports Crimestoppers in safeguarding their



Naz Dossa, CEO of Peoplesafe

Fearless workers and Regional and National Managers through cutting-edge technology services.

Equipping them with MySOS ID badges provides staff with a discreet and direct link to the Peoplesafe Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC), 24/7/365.

Here, our expertly trained controllers monitor and respond to all alarms, summoning the emergency services when required. This ensures that employees working alone have a reliable lifeline to immediate assistance, enhancing their confidence and peace of mind in potentially challenging situations.

Through collaboration with Crimestoppers, Peoplesafe strives to make personal safety a priority for individuals and communities, championing a culture of safety, encouraging positive behaviours and raising awareness among employers and employees.

Phil Breckon, Crimestoppers Eastern Regional Manager and Gemma Gibbs, Crimestoppers Yorkshire & Humberside Regional Manager



# Amazon backs Crimestoppers fake goods campaign

Online retailer Amazon teamed up with Crimestoppers to support a series of campaigns that warns the public about the dangers of buying fake goods.

As more people feel the financial pinch, the temptation to cut costs is rising.

However, buying counterfeit or fake products such as toys and electronics may seem harmless, but ultimately it puts you and your loved ones at risk.

The profits from counterfeit manufacturers are also known to help fund dangerous and serious organised crime.

Rolled out across a number of phases, the campaign has covered subjects including knock-off toys, electronics and fake fashion.

Children's toys that are fake can contain toxic chemicals, sharp edges, and loose parts which can cause choking.

Fake electronics are also more dangerous with a greater likelihood of catching fire, exploding or causing burns.

We will continue to work with partners including Amazon to warn people and help them to stay aware with signs to spot around this increasing retail danger.



“Amazon works with groups like Crimestoppers to help rid the industry of counterfeit goods. We won't stop until we drive counterfeits to zero in our stores. This partnership with Crimestoppers represents another positive step in the industry-wide fight against counterfeits.”

**Grant Lucas, Industry Specialist at Amazon UK**



# New initiative lifts the lid on the scale of illegal streaming harm

Matt Hibbert, Director of Anti-Piracy at Sky, reflects on a new campaign about the dangers of illegal streaming.

It's often argued that we are in a golden age of TV. There's never been more choice for consumers, and an explosion in technology and connectivity has meant it's never been easier to deliver quality content to the right device, at the right time.

Unfortunately, this opportunity has not gone unnoticed by organised criminals. Once the preserve of traders down at the local pub or market, online piracy is now big business. With millions to be made, content is stolen at scale and distributed through a complex ecosystem of organisations, who are often involved in a range of crime.

And beyond the direct links to criminality and the resultant loss to the economy, accessing content in this way can come with some very real risks to consumers. In fact, around a third of people in the UK say that they, or someone they know, have been a victim of fraud, hacking or scams as a result of illegally streaming content.

## Ringleaders sanctioned, users warned

Rights holders, including Sky, are successfully partnering with law enforcement to identify and prosecute those involved in running illegal streaming services. Ringleaders are receiving significant custodial sentences. Consumers are not immune either, with many receiving 'cease and desist' notices.

Given the risks, there's never been a more important time to raise awareness. That's the aim of a brand-new campaign rolled out in



Matt Hibbert, Sky Director of Anti-Piracy

partnership with broadcasters, rights owners, law enforcement bodies, charities such as Crimestoppers and the Intellectual Property Office.

BeStreamWise.com is a new platform highlighting the risks involved in illegal streaming, and helping consumers safely find content they love. Its central message, 'Illegal Streams Let Criminals In', clearly articulates what's at stake.

## Surge in tip-offs about dodgy streams

Key to the success of BeStreamWise is working in partnership. Having the support of a trusted, recognised authority like Crimestoppers makes people sit up and pay attention, while also providing a platform for people to anonymously report suspicious behaviour. There has been an 80 per cent rise in online reports since BeStreamWise.com launched. This shows partnerships, cutting edge tech and targeted campaigns improve the public's understanding whilst challenging those who are culpable for online piracy.

## FACT: Defending creativity, confronting IP crime

Eddy Leviten, Chief Operating Officer at FACT, on why partnering with Crimestoppers has proven so successful.



Eddy Leviten, Chief Operating Officer at FACT

Since its inception in 1983, FACT (Federation Against Copyright Theft) have been the guardian of the UK's film and television industry, a relentless force against copyright infringement.

With the streaming era's rise, we've transformed, teaming up with major broadcasters and sports leagues to combat online piracy.

Today, FACT stands tall as an IP protection pioneer, renowned for its cutting-edge strategies.

In 2007, FACT started a successful partnership with Crimestoppers. This relationship revolutionised the fight against film and television piracy in the UK.

Swapping old-school hotlines for Crimestoppers' anonymous reporting made us more efficient and delivered better intelligence. From targeting bootleg DVDs to tackling the digital wave, 99% of our intel now zeroes in on online piracy.

### Largest prosecution ever

The numbers speak volumes: In 2023, over 600 Crimestoppers reports flooded in about illegal content suppliers. A whopping 30% of our actionable intelligence stemmed from these reports, fuelling 1 in 5 investigations. We've even trained Crimestoppers' Call Agents, turning them into intel-savvy allies.

Collaborating with law enforcement partners across the UK and worldwide, we've brought down major piracy rings, like 'Flawless,' a case that stemmed from information provided by Crimestoppers and which resulted in five individuals being jailed for a total of 30 years. It was thought to be the largest-ever prosecution of an illegal streaming network.

Why does this matter? Because intellectual property theft isn't a harmless crime. It's a threat to 2.1 million jobs and 7.4% of the UK economy tied to the creative industries. Crimestoppers' intel isn't just data; it's

the lifeblood of our work, powering investigations and sealing piracy's fate.

And we're not stopping there. Expanding our partnership to target illicit vape suppliers, we're collaborating with industry giants to curb counterfeit vapes' impact on society.

### An indispensable partnership

Looking ahead to 2024, we're amplifying our arsenal, fortifying our bond with Crimestoppers. Together, we'll enhance due diligence, bolster digital forensics, and intensify investigations. Our partnership isn't just a collaboration, it represents an unwavering commitment to the pursuit of justice.

FACT and Crimestoppers: a partnership that's not just impactful but indispensable. Here's to 17 years of triumph and a future forged in solidarity against crime.

# A pragmatic approach to help protect sex workers & users online

Will Bandy, Head of Safety and Compliance at Vivastreet, explores measures to stop exploitation and crime on their platform.

Vivastreet UK is a classified advertising platform that allows users to post adverts for goods and services across numerous categories. Our site also features a range of dating and personal service categories, which includes sex workers who may choose to advertise on the platform.

Sex work is legal in the UK, and there is a wealth of academic literature showing that advertising online provides a range of safety benefits to sex workers. This includes allowing them to vet clients and access safety and support services – as well as being able to work away from the streets.

Vivastreet's mission is to provide users with a safe and trusted advertising space, that is free from stigma. As part of this mission, we partnered with Crimestoppers in April 2023, establishing a safe and anonymous reporting route for web visitors to pass on their concerns.

## Creating a safe space

We're working with Crimestoppers because we are acutely aware that the online space presents unique risks and challenges.

Our users are a vital part of our work to maintain a safe platform for all advertisers, but we are aware that there are many reasons users may not wish to report their concerns directly to the police. This can be a particular challenge for sex workers, who face significant barriers to reporting crime due to stigma and discrimination.

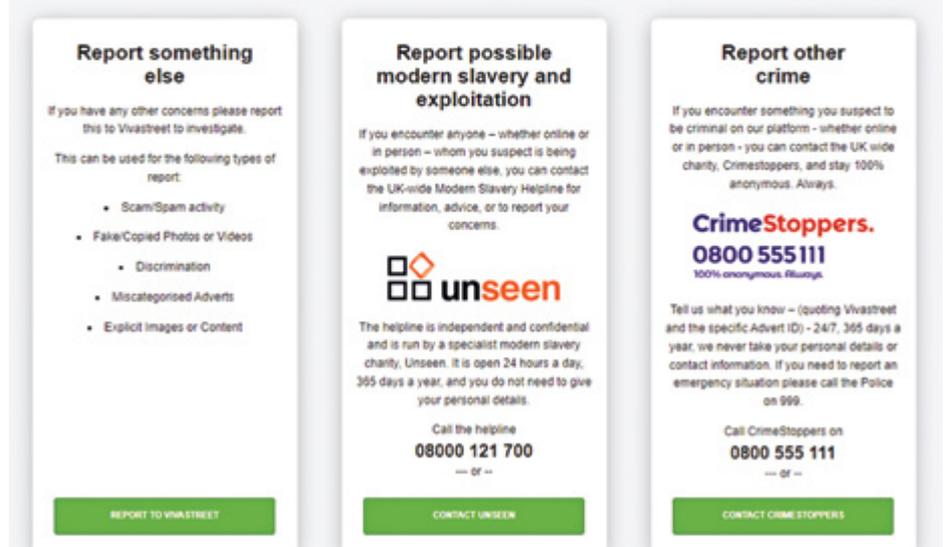
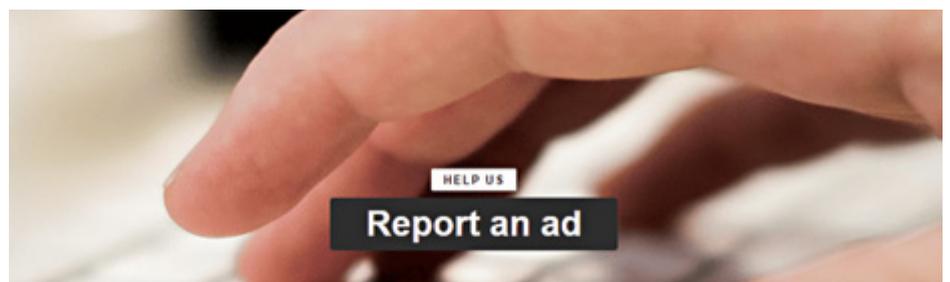
That's why working with Crimestoppers – which provides the ability for users to make anonymous reports to a trusted partner – is crucial for Vivastreet. We know it will provide users with the peace of mind

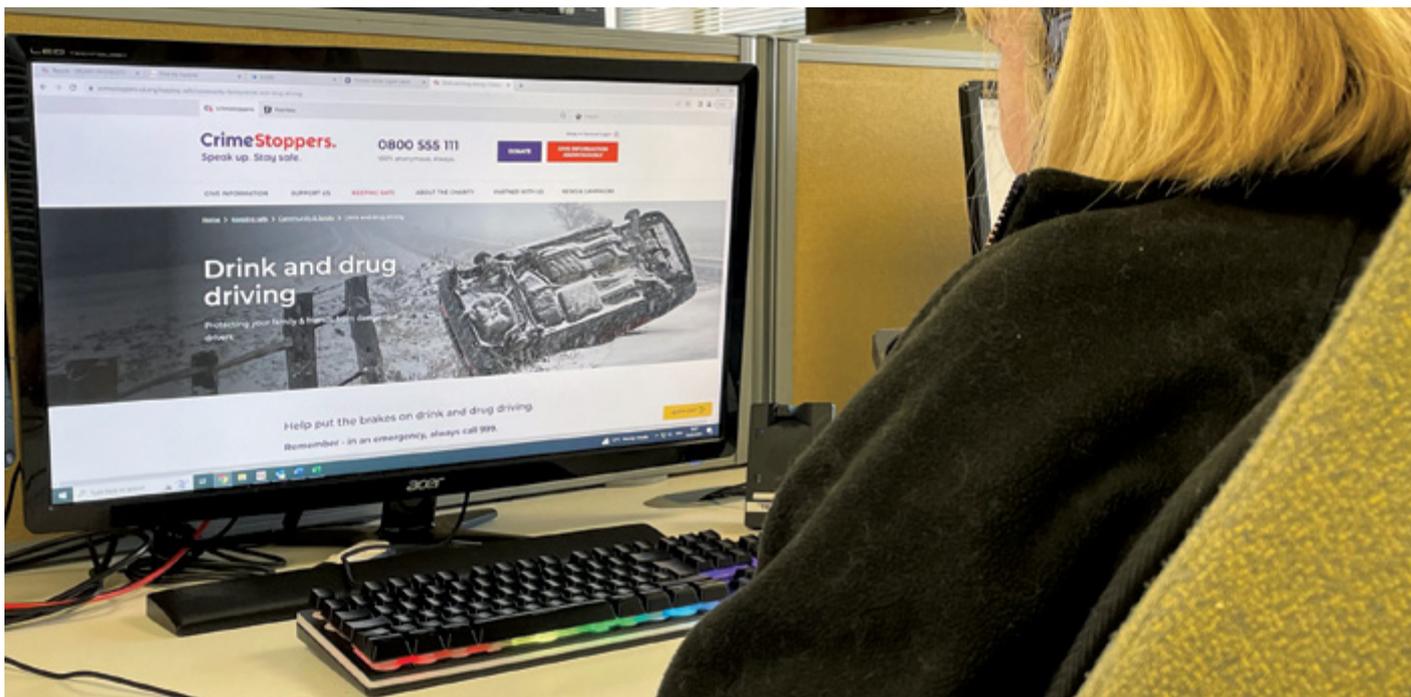
that they will stay anonymous, thereby empowering them to pass on information that will actively contribute to the safety of our community.

We are proud of this industry-leading partnership with Crimestoppers and look forward to building on its success. Our focus remains on empowering users, building confidence, and continuing to raise awareness about the importance of our reporting pathways. Together with Crimestoppers, we are committed to making our platform a safer space for everyone.



Will Bandy, Head of Safety and Compliance at Vivastreet





## Opening our doors to journalists helps build trust

Crimestoppers is sometimes confused with BBC Crimewatch, or it's wrongly assumed that we are part of the police.

Ensuring people are confident about who we are and what we do is critical to Crimestoppers' success.

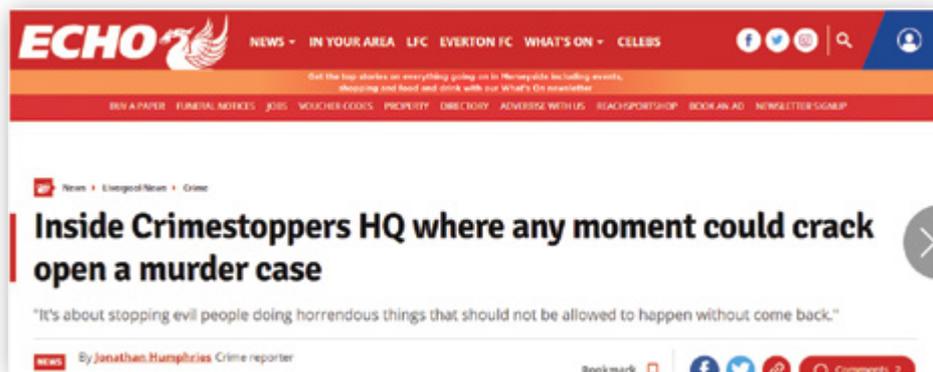
Overcoming these confusions and building trust is behind our recent endeavour hosting visits for journalists from both national and regional newsrooms to our head office and Contact Centre.

### Providing a window

Journalist visits allow us to prove we are open, transparent and keen to work with those professionals who have the potential to reach millions.

It allows us to deal head on with concerns around how we protect the thousands each day who trust us with their crime information every year.

**Of course, strict protections are in place to guard all those individuals who contact us. This is vital.** But when we are able to facilitate a media tour and give journalists the opportunity to chat with our charity's leaders, and see our main Contact Centre, it allows them to witness our



charity's open culture for themselves – and then report back to their readers.

### Reassuring results

In recent months, we have benefited from a trip by Liverpool Echo crime reporter Jonathan Humphries (about to join BBC North West at the time of going to press), and from a visit by Kirsten Robertson from the features team at Metro.co.uk.

With published articles such as 'Hushed voice and Haribo: What happened when I went to Crimestoppers HQ' and 'Inside Crimestoppers HQ where any moment could crack open a murder case', it shows that these tailored tours are reaping rewards.



A close-up photograph of a Black woman with her hair in braids, wearing a red blazer over a white top. She is holding a smartphone to her ear and looking thoughtfully to the side. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be a window with light coming through.

# A snapshot of national campaigns

Crimestoppers devises and runs a range of impactful national, regional and local campaigns throughout the year. They raise awareness of our charity and, using 'signs to spot', they encourage people to make contact if they have a tip-off. We also highlight developing crime trends.

Whilst collectively supporting people in every corner of the country, our national campaigns specifically target areas of high crime and deprivation to reach communities who are less likely to talk directly to the authorities.

To help boost confidence among people who might be unsure about using our service, we use brand campaigns to promote Crimestoppers and highlight the basics: guaranteeing anonymity; being independent of the police; and our charity status.

Here's a selection of the areas and crime types that we spotlight.

CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS

**Cannabis cultivation harms businesses and individuals in your area**

Organised criminal gangs are setting up cannabis farms in abandoned pubs, rental properties (both commercial and residential) and in rural barns.

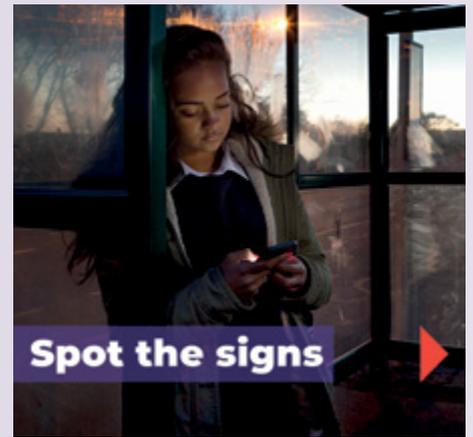
They use threats, violence and exploitation.

**CrimeStoppers.**  
0800 555 111  
100% anonymous. Always.  
crimestoppers-uk.org

You can speak up and remain 100% anonymous. Always.

**Cannabis cultivation**

This campaign was to inform the public and professionals on the harms and dangers associated with organised crime gangs and cannabis cultivation. A 16% uplift in reports disseminated on cannabis cultivation was achieved.



**Spot the signs**

**Criminal gangs can make vast amounts of money by bringing people illegally into the UK**

Criminals profit from the illegal activities that they force many of these men, women, and children to take part in, which often includes drugs trade, violence, and supply of weapons.

**CrimeStoppers.**  
0800 555 111  
100% anonymous. Always.  
crimestoppers-uk.org

You can speak up and remain 100% anonymous. Always.

**Immigration crime & modern slavery**

A campaign warning the public about the harms that organised crime gangs bring to communities by exploiting vulnerable individuals who are brought into the country illegally, forced to work for little to no pay, and are coerced into illegal activity.



**Help protect your community**

**Know something about robberies in your community?**

If you have information about crime, speak up to our charity. 100% anonymous. Always.

**CrimeStoppers.**  
0800 555 111  
100% anonymous. Always.  
crimestoppers-uk.org

**Acquisitive crime: theft, robbery and burglary**

This national acquisitive crime campaign issued a warning to slash the 'window of opportunity' for theft, robbery and burglary. This was backed up by regional media releases for the West Midlands and the North West using local data.



**County Lines**

Running over the summer of 2023, our national County Lines campaign used our latest statistics to illustrate the anonymous tip-offs Crimestoppers has received.

We created and promoted a heat map showing over 3,000 anonymous reports to our charity about suspected County Lines activity across the UK in 2022 (Map credit: Esri).



# Challenging sexual harassment against women and girls

In January 2023, we published our report about sexual harassment in public spaces, which identified that there are men who felt they were entitled to sexually harass women with impunity.

One harrowing fact was that 30% of respondents reported that their first encounter with sexual harassment took place between the ages of 11-13 years.

## An epidemic

Last year's campaign highlighted that the majority of respondents felt that sexual harassment continues to pose a significant problem in the UK, with some participants likening it to an epidemic.

In our Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) national campaign in January 2024, we explored the narrative further by presenting everyday scenarios where women commonly face sexual harassment.

Whether they're in the park jogging, commuting on public transport, or out on a social occasion, our message is clear: any unwelcome or unwanted sexual advances, whether verbal or physical, are unacceptable and can be a crime.

The campaign informed the public about the signs to spot, so if they ever find

themselves in a situation where they witness a form of sexual harassment, they feel confident to identify it, and take safe and secure steps to give information to Crimestoppers on the perpetrators.

The campaign landing page also signposts visitors seeking support services for victims, including those who are female, LGBTQ+ community, men, victims of domestic abuse and people who have experienced childhood sexual abuse.

## From national to regional and local

The national campaign was primarily delivered across paid social media. Additionally, our efforts were enhanced thanks to the Police and Crime Commissioners in Warwickshire and Dyfed-Powys and their successful bids for funding from the Home Office Safer Streets 5 initiative.

Working with stakeholders, we delivered the campaign through digital channels and out-of-home advertising; on buses, both internally for passengers and externally on bus rears and sides, as well as using radio adverts.

Further amplifying the campaign through localised activity, our Regional Managers

also ran paid campaigns across Wales, Kent and Cumbria, which enables us to reach deeper into those communities, for individuals to engage with our content.

One of the underlying messages of the campaign is for perpetrators who don't think of themselves as being misogynistic or realise their actions may amount to criminal sexual harassment, that their actions and words do indeed have consequences, for both their victims and themselves.

Our work in this area is far from over and we will be planning impactful campaigns to encourage reporting and challenge this type of behaviour.



# Helping to track down drivers who risk everything by drink and drug driving

Keeping our streets safe for all was the focus of Crimestoppers' Yuletide campaign which appealed for anonymous information about persistent drug and drink drivers. We also urged those who might be tempted to break the law to stop and think again about their dangerous behaviour.

The temptation to throw caution to the wind and get behind the wheel whilst intoxicated increases over holiday periods as family, friends and colleagues come together to mark the occasion.

According to the Department for Transport, it's estimated that nearly half of drug drivers who have been caught by the police go on to reoffend.

Figures show that convictions for driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol (or both) have shot up by 40% in under a decade. Public concern about this issue remains strong, with our charity receiving over 100 anonymous reports each day.

We created a new video and artwork for this national campaign, and these were shared with partners to promote across their network.

As hoped, we had an incredible response from the public, who appreciated that they could take action and express their concerns without any potential embarrassment or awkwardness, thanks to anonymity.





Stuart Jones, Regional County Lines Coordinator for the East Midlands, reflects on work to tackle this pressing problem.

County Lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line.”

They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money, and will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Exploitation of vulnerable adults and children is a key component and indeed core dependency of the County Lines business model, as it provides a buffer between the street level drug suppliers – those who carry the risk and the organised criminals – those who reap the rewards.

### Street level dealing or organised crime?

Typically, when the police and public encounter County Lines criminality, it is the street level, potentially vulnerable, individuals (children, drug users etc.) and not the controllers.

In these instances, it is crucial to be able to look beyond the face value of a situation. A child encountered supplying drugs may

well be the next Pablo Escobar in the making. They may, however, be a small, exploited cog in a much bigger machine. If this individual is indeed vulnerable, simply arresting and prosecuting them may have negative and unintended consequences.

Therefore, it is essential to upskill people in spotting the signs of potential vulnerability and exploitation and encouraging them to report these concerns.

### Encouraging rise in reporting

Working alongside Crimestoppers, we have seen a number of successful campaigns run throughout the East Midlands which have sought to educate people around the signs of exploitation.

Such campaigns have led to a significant rise in reporting around County Lines, drug supply, violence, exploitation and weapons.

Further to this, we have worked closely with Crimestoppers and key industries who have unwittingly found their businesses utilised by County Lines perpetrators.

One such example took place during the COVID-19 lockdown. Suddenly taxi companies found themselves in the



Stuart Jones, Regional County Lines Coordinator for the East Midlands

unenviable position of transporting drugs and vulnerable individuals around the country. There is no suggestion that taxi operators were in any way criminally culpable.

### Tailored training for taxi drivers

Working alongside policing colleagues from the East Midlands Special Operations Unit and the East Midlands forces, Crimestoppers developed a County Lines training package for taxi drivers, which is now already mandatory if you wish to obtain a taxi licence in Lincoln.

Such initiatives are crucial in pursuing a partnership approach to tackling exploitation and creating safe public spaces for vulnerable individuals – and I look forward to working alongside Crimestoppers on many more in the near future.



Crimestoppers CEO Mark Hallas, speaking to Siobhian Brown MSP, Minister for Victims and Community Safety

## Celebrating Scotland's grassroots community groups

The work of local community groups and other charities is often unsung. They know their communities better than anyone, and can also reach people who may one day need Crimestoppers' unique service.

Our charity teamed up with Network Rail Scotland and awarded six youth-focused groups and six adult-focused groups a modest pot of £500 to spend on creating a special day during the summer for their group, and to also provide an opportunity to learn about our 100% anonymous reporting service.

To celebrate their work and contribution, we held a special event in Maryhill, Glasgow in the autumn of 2023.

Over 120 invited guests heard from the award winners about the fantastic work they undertake in their communities and the difference the funding provided by Crimestoppers and Network Rail Scotland made.

Guests at the celebration included The Minister for Victims and Community Safety Siobhian Brown MSP and representatives from community partners, safety projects and other charities.

Staff and volunteers from Crimestoppers and Fearless also travelled to the event to show their appreciation, including Crimestoppers' CEO Mark Hallas



Sophia from Edinburgh's Milan South West Carers group

“Our group works with South Asian communities in the Scottish capital. Through this funding, we were able to reach out to people as well as break language barriers and increase awareness around crime reporting.

“The project delivered two informative and creative events for older people and unpaid carers to empower them to feel confident to report anonymously, as well as feel safe in the process.”

# Grooming using vapes – the new threat to vulnerable young people

In the wake of a concerning surge in criminals exploiting young people through vapes, Crimestoppers in Wales launched a poignant awareness campaign that raises the alarm about this new threat claiming the innocence of young people.

The campaign serves as a wake-up call by spotlighting the uncomfortable reality of children being preyed on and groomed using vapes, food, money and gifts. A stark narrative weaves through the everyday lives of those exploited young individuals, emphasising the need for a collective response to help police to take action and stop the abuse.

The case study shared in the campaign adds a human touch. It's the story of a 14-year-old girl subjected to vape-related sexual grooming, and paints a vivid picture of the vulnerabilities of victims. It prompts us to ponder not only the immediate dangers but also the long-term consequences of such exploitation.

The stand-out from the campaign's storytelling is the coercive tactics employed by

criminals to manipulate and control young minds. The narrative doesn't just stop at facts and figures. It delves into the complexities of these relationships, offering a poignant glimpse into the lives of those affected.

In collaboration with the Regional Organised Crime Unit, Wales National Manager Hayley Fry steered this campaign. Grooming and exploitation, unfortunately, are not novel phenomena in the criminal landscape. Nevertheless, the escalating popularity of vaping among young people poses a contemporary challenge, putting more of our youth at risk.



“As a Detective Sergeant, I’ve seen the impact of vaping-related exploitation on young lives, with some of our investigations involving children as young as 12 – and sadly some of these children have no idea of the level of exploitation they’re facing.

“By standing together to raise awareness through this campaign, we can protect vulnerable children and dismantle criminal networks who prey on these young people.”

**Detective Sergeant Alexandra Smith from Gwent Police’s public protection unit**

## Northern Ireland: Boosting Crimestoppers awareness through crucial partnerships

Crimestoppers in Northern Ireland continues to support police with anonymous information and by providing a number of rewards for ongoing investigations.

Publicity for our service is vital to ensure everyone across Northern Ireland knows we are here when they need to share something about crime, completely anonymously.

With recent funding from the Northern Ireland Dormant Accounts Fund, and following a review of how we communicate digitally, a number of recommendations have been implemented.

Included is a new suite of digital assets created specifically for partner organisations such as PSNI, Department of Justice, Northern Ireland Office, PCSPs (Policing and Community Safety Partnerships), and other organisations to share further afield.

We’ll have more details to showcase our activity in Northern Ireland when we publish our Impact Report covering 2023-24.

A spokesperson for PSNI said: “Crimestoppers in Northern Ireland continues to help reach individuals and communities who might otherwise choose to stay silent. I’m pleased that people trust the charity in increasing numbers, which benefits the whole of Northern Ireland.”

# Help your community stop crime: Be a Community Ambassador with Crimestoppers

In November 2023, we refreshed our Community Ambassador scheme to get many more local organisations talking about Crimestoppers and how we help.

The initiative was created in 2013 by the late Colin Dobinson, from our Essex Committee, who received our Volunteer Lifetime Achievement Award in 2021. It was such a good idea that our current volunteer community asked for updated resources so they could set up similar schemes.

## Grassroots advocates

Community Ambassadors are local organisations with knowledge of their communities. They represent a range of organisations, from public authorities and charities, to other grass roots agencies. Their staff and volunteers are often in day-to-day contact with those who are involved with or affected by crime.

Many people know about crime, but perhaps fear or mistrust keeps them silent.

A conversation with someone you trust can help build confidence for them to use and contact Crimestoppers when they need to: one anonymous phone call, one online form, can make all the difference.

## Community Ambassadors...

- Learn about Crimestoppers and all it offers.
- Provide 'clients' or partners with Crimestoppers information and materials.
- Have conversations and explain the benefits of our anonymous service.
- Give people the power to speak up.

In doing so, this increases the quantity and quality of intelligence we pass on to police, and therefore contributes to community safety.



We provide information and resources to get started and keep on going. We have tools and resources to help you, from posters to videos, articles to leaflets. We can arrange a talk with your organisation about how Crimestoppers makes a difference to people and communities.

If you'd like to become involved, please get in touch: [volunteering@crimestoppers.uk.org](mailto:volunteering@crimestoppers.uk.org)

## Annual Dinner celebrates the best of Crimestoppers

The Lansdowne Club in London was the venue for our Annual Dinner and it was fantastic to be joined by so many of our supporters and strategic partners.

Sponsorship of the evening's event was by Altia. They are a long-standing partner and provide award-winning software solutions to law enforcement and businesses.

Chair and Founder Lord Ashcroft shared anonymised success stories of our work and praised our national Contact Centre staff for their professionalism.

### Sky's the limit

Guest speaker was Martin Brunt from Sky News. He has been with the channel since its launch in 1989 and is their highly respected crime correspondent.

Crimestoppers has worked with Martin over the years, reporting on our many appeals, rewards and Most Wanted campaigns.

It was heart-warming to hear him say that our charity's work "in encouraging people to speak up has never been more needed."



Top: Martin Brunt, crime correspondent for Sky News, speaking at the Annual Dinner



# Speak up. Stop crime. Stay safe.

Crimestoppers is an independent charity that gives you the power to speak up to stop crime, 100% anonymously.

This means:

- No police contact
- No witness statements
- No courts

## Tell us what you know, not who you are.

Speak up and stay 100% anonymous. Always.

Crimestoppers Trust, registered charity  
in England & Wales (1108687),  
Scotland (SC037960).

**CrimeStoppers.**

**0800 555 111**

100% anonymous. Always.  
[crimestoppers-uk.org](http://crimestoppers-uk.org)