



Home Office

BUILDING A SAFE, JUST
AND TOLERANT SOCIETY

Tackling mobile phone theft in the UK:

A partnership approach

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Home Office research

Mobile phone theft, published January 2002

Sparked widespread public, media and Parliamentary attention

Mobile phone-related theft:

- 710,000 in 2000/01
- Nearly one third of all robberies
- Mobile phone theft was main driver behind rise in street crime
- Tackling mobile phone theft key to driving down street crime

Characteristics of mobile phone robbery

- Young victims and offenders:
 - Almost half (48%) the victims were under 18
 - Peak age for offenders was 16
 - One third of all offenders were aged 15 or 16
- Male on male crime:
 - 90% of offenders were male
 - 80% of victims were male

Metropolitan Police (London)

Street Crime (personal robbery plus snatch theft)

- 29% of street crime involves stealing a mobile phone only
- Further 22% of street crime, a mobile phone is amongst the items stolen

51% of street crime in London involves the theft of a mobile phone

MOBILE INDUSTRY CRIME ACTION FORUM

UK cross-industry forum for tackling mobile phone crime

Benefits for Government:

- Ease of contact
- Speed of response
- Co-ordination
 - one industry voice
 - progressing action
- Dissemination

Equipment Identity Registers (EIRs)

EIRs enable networks to block phones from their network by reference to the handset's unique equipment identifier (IMEI)

Jan 02: 2 out of 5 UK networks unable to bar stolen handsets

Feb 02: These 2 networks commit to invest in technology

Aug 02: All 5 networks can block stolen handsets on their own network

Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR)

- Government worked with / through MICAf to secure commitment from all 5 UK networks to share information on lost and stolen phones
- Global database of lost and stolen mobile phones run by GSM (Global System for Mobiles) Association
- Operates by reference to the handset's unique equipment identifier (IMEI number)
- Publicly launched on 1 November 2002 by mobile phone industry, Government and police

Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR)

- Phones reported as lost or stolen to the networks will be blocked across all UK networks
- Lost or stolen phones worthless to thieves within UK
- Approximately 647,000 mobile phones on the database (w/e 2 May 2003)
- BUT phones blocked in the UK can still be exported abroad where they will work again

Mobile Telephones (Re-programming) Act 2002

But blocking won't work if IMEI is changed (reprogrammed)
... so new legislation to support shared database (CEIR)

Mobile Telephones (Re-programming) Act applies in England,
Scotland and Northern Ireland and came into force on 4
October 2002

Mobile Telephones (Re-programming) Act 2002

Creates new offences of:

- Changing the unique identifying characteristic of a mobile phone (IMEI number)
- Possessing, supplying, or offering to supply the necessary equipment with the intent to use it for re-programming mobile phones

Penalty = 5 years in prison and / or unlimited fines

15 arrests made so far

Immobilise Phone Crime Campaign

- Mobile phone industry led and funded advertising campaign
- Aim = Raise public awareness of CEIR
- Message = Stolen phones don't work anymore
- Single number to make reporting easy (08701 123 123)
- Website www.immobilise.com
- Actively promoted through mobile phone retail shops - posters, leaflets, window stickers



STOLEN PHONES

DON'T WORK ANYMORE



✦ www.immobilise.com

We can now stop stolen and lost phones being used on any network, even if the SIM card's been changed. Call your network or 08701 123 123 to get your phone blocked and help stop mobile crime.

IMMOBILISE
PHONE CRIME 

CALL TIME ON MOBILE CRIME



✦ www.immobilise.com

We can now stop stolen and lost phones being used on any network, even if the SIM card's been changed. Call your network or 08701 123 123 to get your phone blocked and help stop mobile crime.

IMMOBILISE
PHONE CRIME 

STOLEN PHONES

DON'T WORK ANYMORE



Call your network or 08701 123 123 to get your stolen or lost phone blocked across every network.

IMMOBILISE
PHONE CRIME 

Immobilise Phone Crime Campaign

- Launched in London in March 2003

March 2003

- 10,000 phone calls to the Immobilise single number
- 14,500 visitors to website
- 200 requests for Immobilise material



Securing handsets

Equally important to tackle the problem at source

Work started with 6 major manufacturers

- Existing GSM international security standards state that IMEI number should be resistant to change
- Manufacturers confirmed that new products comply with GSM standard (legacy products may not comply)
- But need for longer-term enhanced security strategy for 3G phones

European Problem

Mobile phone theft has emerged as a problematic new form of volume crime

- EUCPN survey - significant and growing problem in France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden
- EU Eurobarometer survey found between a fifth and a third of respondents across Member States felt they were likely to be the victim of a mobile phone theft in the coming year

European Solution?

- GSM Association, which runs the global database of lost and stolen phones (CEIR), represents more than 500 networks in 120 countries but only a minority have joined the database

Solution

- Encourage all EU mobile phone networks to join the CEIR
- Encourage EU networks to share data across Member States

Result

- Once a customer has reported their phone as lost or stolen to their network, the phone would be blocked across the EU

Summary

Tackling mobile phone theft in the UK

- Home Office research
- Mobile Industry Crime Action Forum
- Central Equipment Identity Register
- Mobile Telephones (Re-programming) Act 2002
- Immobilise Phone Crime campaign
- Securing handsets
- Europe