

BBC Publishes Article Regarding Merseyside Electricity Theft Court Cases

31st March 2016

On 17th March 2016, the BBC reported that *'almost a fifth of all people prosecuted during 2014-15 for electricity theft in England and Wales, live in Merseyside'*. The BBC went on to explain that Merseyside had seen the largest three-year increase in prosecution numbers.

Underpinning the success of Merseyside Police in securing successful prosecutions has been their forward thinking and strategic targeting of cannabis farms and the production of the Class B drug.

A unique collaborative initiative was set up in 2013 between Scottish Power - a UKRPA member - and Merseyside Police. They are working very closely together in a joint undertaking to proactively identify cannabis cultivations, safely dismantle them and then recover the evidence to secure criminal prosecutions. For the first time, an energy company and a regional police force have come together in a symbiotic partnership.

This initiative has inevitably played a large part in securing the 138% increase in the detection and successful prosecutions evidenced by the BBC, testament to the effectiveness of a co-ordinated approach to tackling energy theft and crime between energy companies and regional police forces.

The illegal abstraction of electricity and gas theft is a nationwide issue. It causes a severe risk to the life of perpetrators and innocent bystanders. In 2015, the UKRPA estimated that the value of stolen energy is up to £440m every year.

The UKRPA would welcome similar initiatives to be developed with other regional police forces such as that undertaken by both Scottish Power and Merseyside Police, so that law abiding citizens do not have to bear the burden through their energy bills for those that are intent on undertaking criminal activity.

Sgt Angie Norstrom from Merseyside Police's cannabis dismantling team said: "We will use every piece of legislation at our disposal to go after the criminals behind cannabis cultivation and the cultivation of drugs, and that includes electricity theft. This partnership helps the police team, who dismantle these crime scenes, to detect common patterns and techniques meaning that they are more likely to be spotted and dealt with".

Ian Main, Scottish Power Revenue Protection Service, added, "Having an electrician embedded within the police unit means that we can make a property safe for police to enter, quickly and efficiently. The knowledge that we build up through this partnership is invaluable when dealing with electricity theft and its association with cannabis farms".

Notes to the editors:

The United Kingdom Revenue Protection Association (UKRPA) is a trade association for parties involved in detecting and dealing with meter tampering and the illegal abstraction of electricity, gas and water, and for providers of products and services to those parties. The UKRPA currently has a total of seventeen members, working in both gas and electricity revenue protection areas across Great Britain and Northern Ireland, also providing more specialist products and services (e.g. metering).

The UKRPA is administered by Gemserv Limited, and provides a 24-hour online facility for the public to anonymously report instances of energy theft.

For more information about the UKRPA, visit www.ukrpa.co.uk or contact the UKRPA on 0207 090 1070.

Find out more about the initiative by joining us at the UKRPA National Revenue Protection Conference on 29th – 30th June 2016. For full details, visit the [UKRPA website](#).