

Van Security Report

Produced by Logistics UK Policy



Foreword from the Chief Executive



Welcome to Logistics UK's report about van security.

Vans play a key and vital role in our economy, and Logistics UK has always recognised the value and increasing importance these vehicles have for our sector, particularly now as the number and proportion of vans making up urban and rural logistics activity continues to grow.

We are continually working to understand the needs and concerns van operators may have around these vehicles, to assist the ongoing development of our policy positions. In early 2020, members of Logistics UK's Van Policy Working Group identified vehicle security as a significant issue for those using vans. The effects of van crime are not limited to the impact on costs and productivity, but theft of and from vans can have highly negative impacts on van drivers, colleagues and customers too.

Logistics UK undertook research to investigate the nature and scale of the issue of van crime, collating data from police forces across the UK. To further understand the impact of these findings on businesses, we also sought real-life examples and insights from van users through a Van Security Survey.

The results of both activities are brought together in this report. The findings will be used to engage more closely with key stakeholders, to provide evidence to guide the allocation of scarce police resources to crime prevention, encourage greater crime reporting, work with manufacturers to understand what security van operators require and to highlight the impact on van operating businesses to policy makers at all levels of Government.

Crime against van operators ultimately affects our communities and economy, and we are keen to play our part to protect our vital supply chain, ensure the safety of employees in our industry and to keep the UK trading.



David Wells
Chief Executive
Logistics UK

We support, shape and stand-up for efficient logistics

Logistics UK is one of the biggest business groups in the UK, supporting, shaping and standing up for efficient logistics. We are the only organisation in the UK that represents all of logistics, with members from the road, rail, sea and air industries, as well as the buyers of freight services such as retailers and manufacturers whose businesses depend on the efficient movement of goods.

An effective supply chain is vital to Keep Britain Trading, directly impacting over seven million people employed in making, selling and moving the goods that affect everyone everywhere.

With Brexit, technology and other disruptive forces driving changes in the way goods move across borders and through the supply chain, logistics has never been more important to UK plc.

As champions and challengers, Logistics UK speaks to Government with one voice on behalf of the whole sector, greatly increasing the impact of our messages and achieving amazing results for members.

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What is the scale of van crime in the UK?

As part of the current research into van crime, Logistics UK requested data on the thefts of vans and their contents from all police forces throughout the UK. The responses varied, with some areas unable to provide the data due to the way this information was recorded.

The data that were available show van theft and content theft grew annually from 2014 until 2018, but both started to decline in 2019. Records from the first half of 2020 (not shown) suggest this downward trend has continued, though this conclusion cannot

be stated reliably, as the unusual coronavirus-related circumstances of the current year could have affected the results.

The total number of recorded incidents of van content thefts (from the police forces able to provide data) reached its peak in 2018, at 31,892, before dropping to 28,717 in 2019. However, the data shows the average was highest in 2017, and has dropped more than a third between then and 2019.

Percentage change on previous year of the number of thefts

	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
Van thefts	13.3%	41.7%	18.8%	-4.8%
Van content thefts	8.8%	17.7%	0.8%	-10.0%

Source: Responses to Logistics UK Freedom of Information request by 27 Police Forces, August/September 2020.

Number of recorded incidents of contents theft from vans/light commercial vehicles, 2015 to 2020

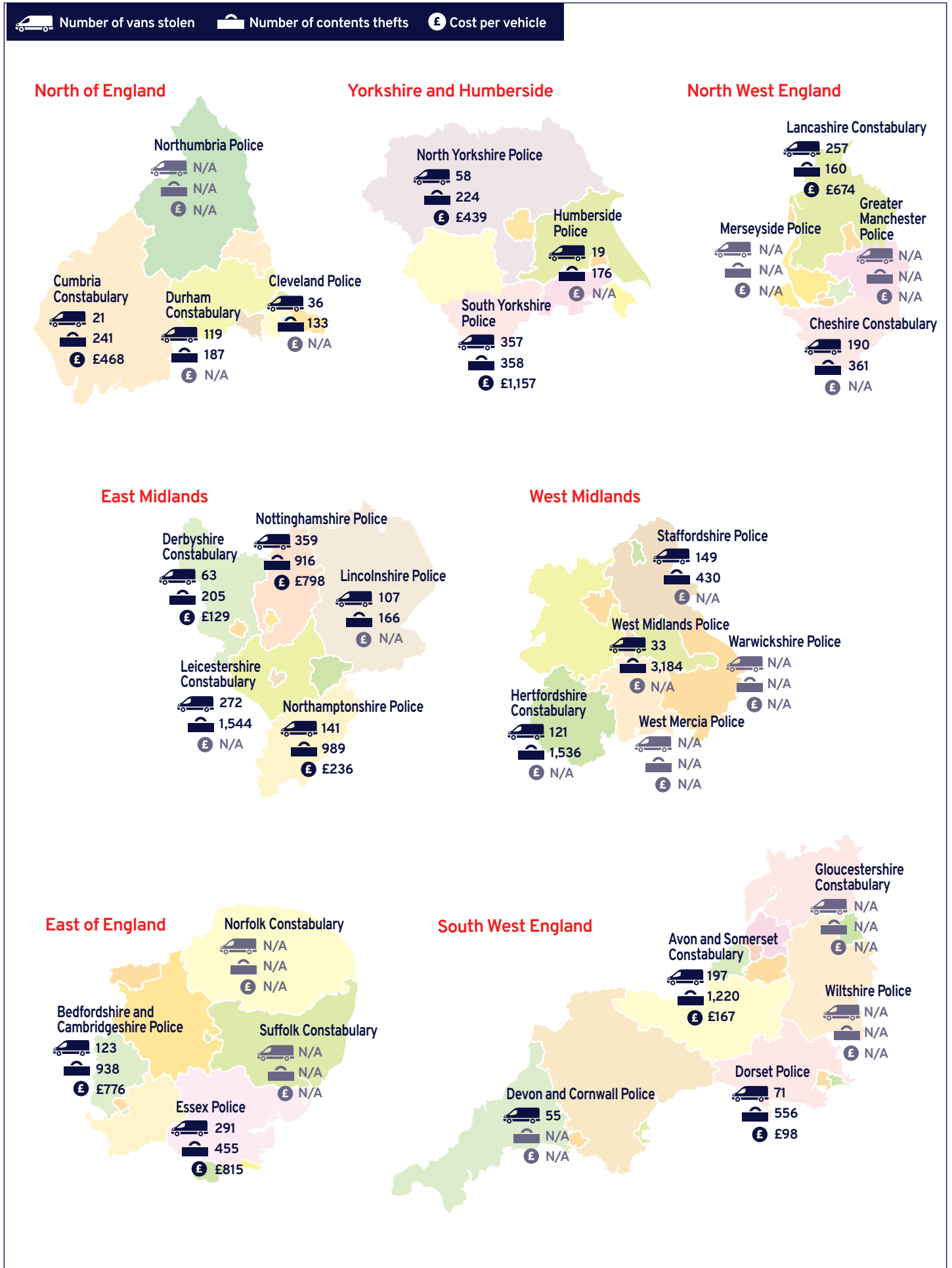
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	First 6 months of 2020
No. of responses	23	24	25	26	26	25
Sum	24,723	26,888	31,653	31,892	28,717	11,729
Average	1074.91	1120.33	1266.12	1226.62	1104.50	469.16
Median	484	540	564	542	359.5	131
Max	9,958	10,637	11,022	12,598	13,253	5,907
Min	68	105	100	133	120	22

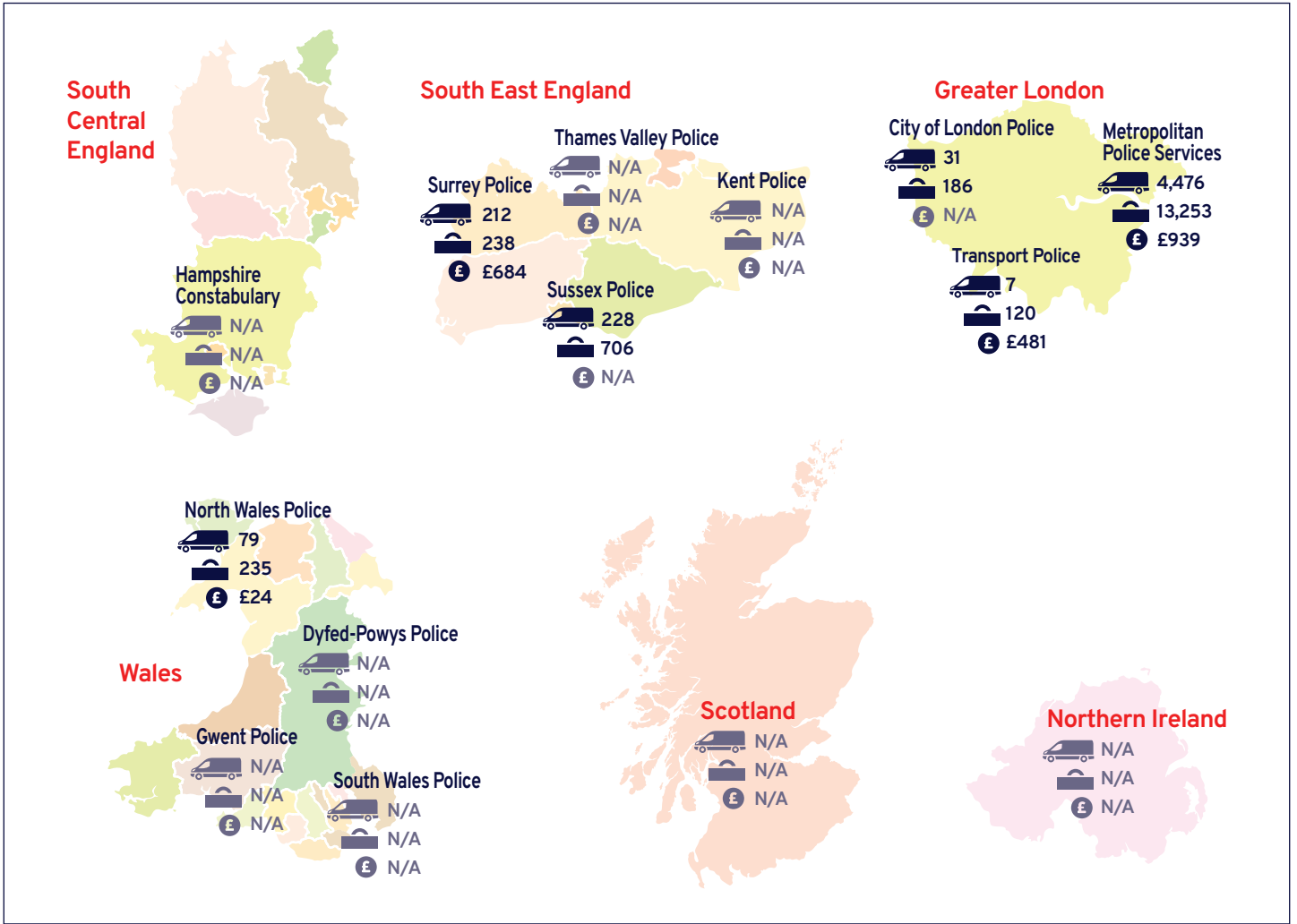
Responses to Logistics UK Freedom of Information request by 27 Police Forces, August/September 2020.

In Logistics UK's Freedom for Information request, 45 police forces were contacted for data, though not all were able to respond. The main reason for being unable to provide data was that the information was not in an easily retrievable format, as there is no regulatory standard for how van crime is recorded and is sometimes grouped with other types of vehicles.

The maps overleaf show the number of vans stolen, the number of content thefts from vans and how much this cost businesses per vehicle for each area of the 27 police forces able to provide data. 'N/A' has been used where data could not be provided.

Police data on van crime in 2019





Source: Responses to Logistics UK Freedom of Information request by 27 Police Forces, August/September 2020.

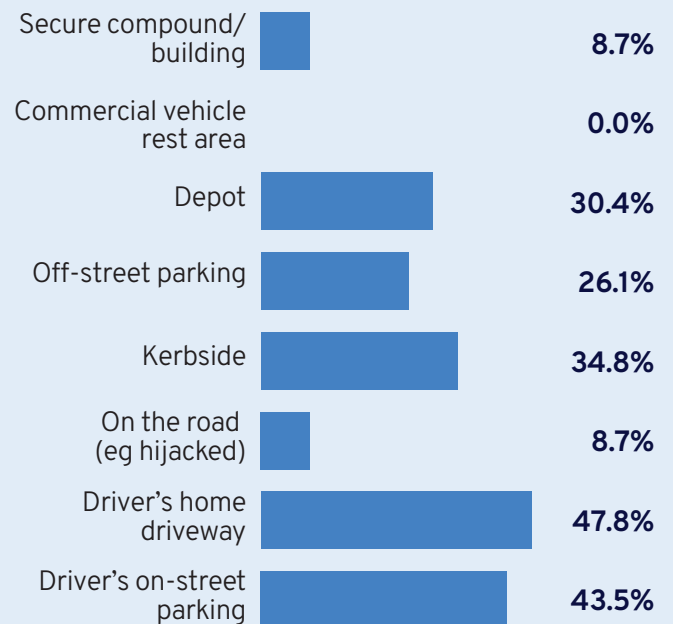
How and why van crimes happen

When identifying potential solutions for van crime, understanding how and why these crimes happen is a useful way to determine if there are any common similarities – counteractive measures can then be implemented to try and prevent these acts from reoccurring.

From August to September 2020, Logistics UK invited van users and operators to take part in its Van Security Survey. The questions asked respondents about their experiences around van crime, from the frequency and location of thefts, to the impact of thefts on their staff and business and any resulting steps taken to mitigate van crime.

Logistics UK had hoped to identify whether there were any locations deemed ‘high-risk’ for van theft, such as large urban areas with significant freight collection and delivery points. The previous maps provide some insights as to where van theft seems most concentrated in relation to broad police force areas, but is not sufficiently detailed to establish theft ‘hotspots’. Respondents to Logistics UK’s Van Security Survey listed a wide range of different locations of vehicle thefts.

What type of location was the van stolen from?



Respondents asked to choose as many as applicable, so total exceeds 100%.

Source: Logistics UK Van Security Survey, August-September 2020.

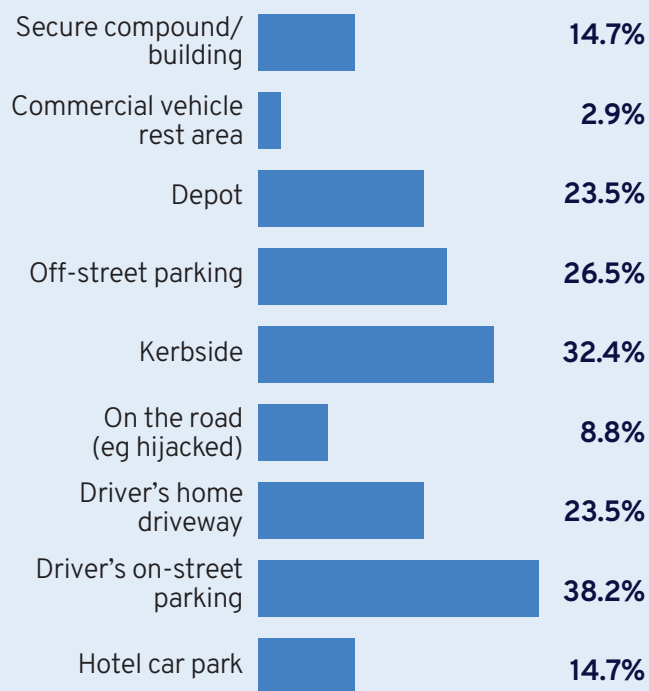
Respondents' experiences suggested a van seemed more likely to be stolen from a driver's residence – 47.8% of van thefts were from a driver's home driveway – whereas a van was more likely to be broken into for its contents when parked on a street (38.2% of thefts occurred when the vehicle was parked at the driver's on-street parking and 32.4% when kerbside). This seems to suggest thieves targeted locations where they knew vans were often kept overnight (eg, a van user's home), while content thefts were the result of a thief spotting a public opportunity.

This conclusion was further enforced by the answers respondents gave to whether there was a pattern to the break-ins for a van's contents: two-thirds said "no", implying these thefts were random. Furthermore, for those who said there **was** a pattern, this was often detailed as seemingly separate thieves repeating the same opportunistic crime (eg stealing from online delivery vans, such as groceries, when the driver was making stops).

The survey also asked respondents how the thefts of their vans' contents were carried out. Very few were the consequence of a van being open or left unlocked, with most resulting in at least minor damage to the vehicle (47.1%), and even more receiving significant damage (64.7%). For the minority that previously described a pattern to the break-ins, cutting equipment or gear was provided as the common mode of entry, while other methods included windows and doors being smashed in. While specialist cutting equipment implies a calculated

theft, damage like broken windows suggests a hurried, 'brute force' approach, commonly associated with an opportunistic crime.

What type of location was the van's contents stolen from?



Respondents asked to choose as many as applicable, so total exceeds 100%.

Source: Logistics UK Van Security Survey, August-September 2020

What reduces van theft?

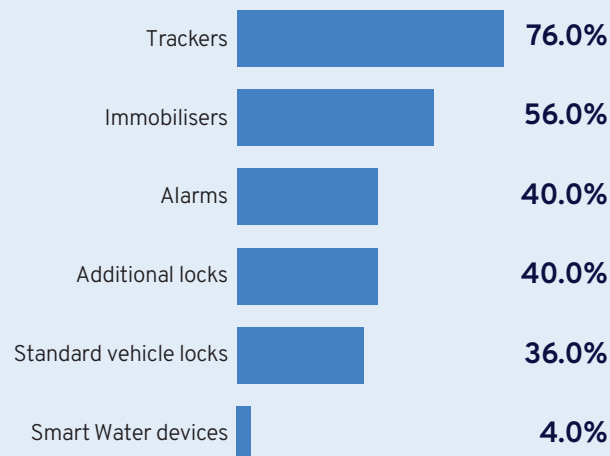
Police data shows the number of vans stolen in 2019 fell by 5.0% compared to 2018¹, despite the number of new vans registered in 2019 increasing by 2.4%² and the population of licensed vans increasing by 2.6%³. Van thefts increased annually from 2014, peaking in 2018 before dropping in 2019 by 4.8%. The number of content thefts also fell by 10.0% over the same period.

The reason for this remains unclear. While some van operators suggested the reduction was due to increased additional security measures, such as locks, or driver training and awareness, it could also be a consequence of issues with reporting (see 'What happens after a van crime?').

The Logistics UK Van Security Survey asked operators of stolen vans whether the vehicles had any anti-theft devices in use, to try to understand why a particular vehicle might have been targeted. The majority reported using trackers and immobilisers, followed by alarms and additional locks. Though vehicles can be used the moment they leave the production line, owners can also

choose to have additional security measures installed, either through the manufacturer or a trusted third-party. Many operators commented that they felt vans required these additional security measures, with 80% saying they would pay extra for additional factory-fitted security measures.

What anti-theft devices were employed?



Respondents asked to choose as many as applicable, so total exceeds 100%.

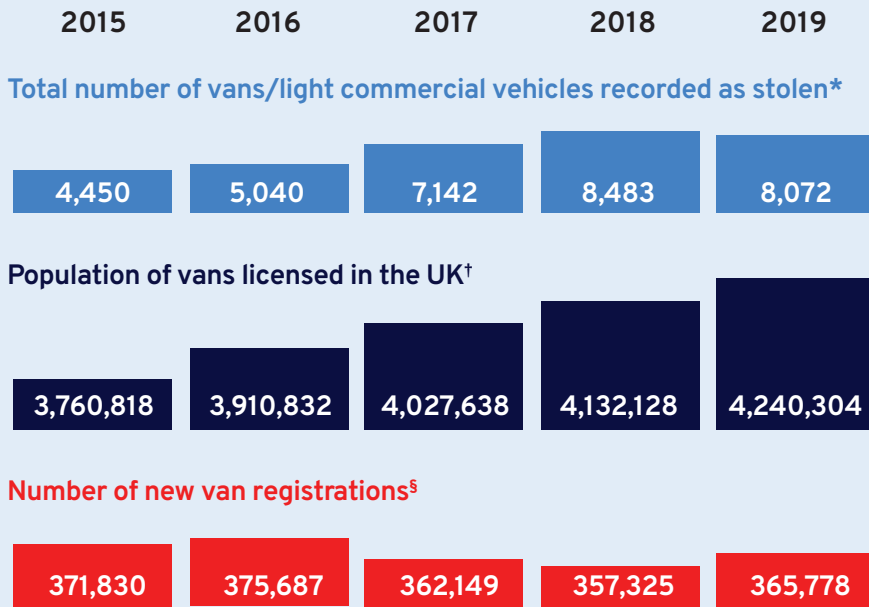
Source: Logistics UK Van Security Survey, August-September 2020

¹ Responses to Logistics UK Freedom of Information request by 27 Police Forces, August/September 2020.

² LCV Registrations, SMMT, January 2020.

³ Vehicle Licensing Statistics: Annual 2019, DfT, April 2020.

Number of vans stolen per year vs no of vans registered



*Responses to Logistics UK Freedom of Information request by 27 Police Forces, August/September 2020.
 †Vehicle Licensing Statistics: Annual 2019, DfT, April 2020. ‡LCV Registrations, SMMT, January 2020.

80%

of respondents would pay extra for additional factory-fitted security measures.

£4,250

The median amount van content theft cost businesses in the last 12 months

£549

The average costs of contents stolen per van in 2019

What is the impact on businesses and drivers?

Based on findings from the Logistics UK Van Security Survey, an organisation has one van stolen every six months.

The impact of van theft reaches beyond the initial value of the stolen vehicle and its contents. Businesses have to spend additional time and money sourcing replacement vehicles or equipment, repairing damage and filling out police reports and insurance claims, as well as incurring the loss of business and potential reputational damage from work that will have to be postponed or cancelled.

In 2019, national police data from 27 forces compiled by Logistics UK shows a total of 8,072 vans were stolen and 28,717 contents thefts were reported to the police. The average cost of contents stolen per van in 2019 was £549, rising to £575 in the first half of 2020.

This amount was consistent with the responses given as part of the Logistics UK Van Security Survey. On average, organisations said they had items stolen from their vans four times in the previous 12 months, costing each business around £4,250 in total. Two-thirds of the van content thefts reported included tools, and more than half involved equipment, revealing businesses are typically expected to resource and replace tools and equipment due to theft once every three months.

We also looked at how van content thefts can affect business operations. Nearly 70% of survey respondents

incurred financial costs and 58% productivity loss. However, impacts were shown to have a significant effect on drivers as well: more than 60% of respondents said content theft negatively impacted the driver, and in almost one in eight content thefts the driver or an employee was threatened.

What type of items were stolen from vans



Respondents asked to choose as many as applicable, so total exceeds 100%.

Source: Logistics UK Van Security Survey, August-September 2020

61% of respondents reported van content thefts having a negative impact on drivers

What happens after a van crime?

Logistics UK investigated what happens to businesses and drivers after a van-related crime, with the intent of identifying whether there are any ways to counteract the negative consequences.

As set out in the section '*What reduces van theft?*', the number of van thefts and vehicle content thefts appears to have fallen since peaking in 2018, with no definitive explanation for this. It could be due to organisations taking additional steps to minimise van thefts, with several respondents to our survey reporting the installation of trackers (46%), additional locks (42%) and alarms (29%), and 32% providing driver training to minimise the theft of van contents. The reduction could also have been due to fewer victims reporting the crime, though almost every respondent to our survey (96%) who had a van stolen in the last 12 months said they reported it to the police. This suggests the drop in data is

due to a real decline in thefts and not underreporting by van users.

However, the variability could have been the result of **how** van crime is recorded. When requesting records of van thefts from the police, it became clear the information was not always easily accessible or consistent across police forces. There is no nationally accepted procedure for how van thefts are recorded, with some areas categorising vans with other vehicles, such as cars or campervans, resulting in the possibility of some crimes being unintentionally omitted from the overall results. It was also possible some content thefts were not included as, though it is mandatory to record the type of vehicle for these crimes, this information was sometimes noted in different sections of the police report which would require extensive manual searches to find.

Logistics UK's policy asks

1 Logistics UK calls on the Home Office to allocate a national crime reporting code for all commercial van thefts and thefts from vans, to allow better understanding of the scale and reach of this crime and to support better allocation of police resource. Currently, individual police forces decide whether to record commercial van thefts separately from those of private cars, resulting in an incomplete picture of the extent of this type of crime. Logistics UK will engage with the National Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service (NaVCIS) and other crime agencies to pursue this objective.

2 Logistics UK recognises that it is vital van operators report every theft from and of vans, regardless of whether an insurance claim will be made, to ensure recognition by the Government and law enforcement agencies of the full extent of these crimes. However, logistics operates across police force areas and the process for reporting can vary from force to force. We want to see a UK-wide standard reporting mechanism, ideally online, for van operators to report van crime.

3 Logistics UK would welcome the opportunity to work with van manufacturers (OEMs) and vehicle security equipment manufacturers to explore what vehicle security features should be developed for new vans to address the types of crime experienced by commercial vehicle operators. We also call for social media platforms to remove all instructional content for committing vehicle-related crime, especially in respect of commercial vans.