

Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Association

Week ending 7th July 2024

Cheshire News & Appeals

Latest Cheshire News



Man jailed for drugs offences in Winsford

A 30-year-old man from Winsford has been jailed for six-and-a-half years for drugs offences in the town.

Joshua Furmedge, of Commonwealth Close, Winsford, was handed the sentence at Liverpool Crown Court on Friday 5 July. He was previously found guilty of possession with intent to supply cocaine and possession of criminal property following a trial in May.



At around 6.30am on Monday 28 November 2022, police executed a warrant at Furmedge's home address. The address and outbuildings were searched, and a quantity of white powder was seized from the garden shed. A mobile phone, a large amount of cash, and a number of high value lifestyle items were also recovered during the warrant. Furmedge was inside the address and was subsequently arrested. A drugs expert confirmed the white powder was cocaine and had a potential value of up to £24,000. In interview, Furmedge stated he had no knowledge of how the drugs had got into the shed. Despite his denials, he was ultimately charged with the offences and found guilty after a trial.

Following the sentencing, DC Chris Jones said: *"I am grateful that Furmedge is now behind bars, and not only have we put a stop to his harmful behaviour, but we have taken drugs off the streets. These drugs would no doubt have been destined for the streets of Winsford, causing harm to not only drug users in the area, but the entire community. Our fight against illegal drugs is never over. We are determined to stamp down on those who are responsible for destroying the lives of people who are addicted to these dangerous substances. If you have any information about drug-related activity in your community, you can contact us by ringing 101 or via cheshire.police.uk/tell-us."*

Warrington drug dealer jailed following stop and search

A 30-year-old man from Warrington has been jailed for over three years after officers found class A drugs on his person.

Kamen Smith appeared at Liverpool Crown Court on Thursday 4 July where he pleaded guilty to two counts of possession with intent to supply class A drugs (crack cocaine and heroin). As a result, the 30-year-old, of Molyneux Avenue, Warrington, was jailed for three years and four months.



The court heard that on Friday 6 January 2023, police in Warrington were notified that two men were conducting a drug deal at the Friar Penketh public house, Warrington. One of these men was identified by plain-clothed officers as Kamen Smith, who was promptly arrested shortly after.

When stopped by officers, Kamen said that he had "ten wraps of white and twelve wraps of brown" on his person containing both powder and rocks. Searching officers also seized a phone from him, for which he refused to provide the PIN code. Following the search, officers from Warrington LPU conducted a warrant at Smith's address and seized two sets of scales from his bedroom. These scales were found to have traces of white powder on them.

Choosing not to defend himself, Smith answered "no comment" throughout his interview and was subsequently charged with two counts of possession with intent to supply class A drugs (crack cocaine and heroin). Appearing at Liverpool Crown Court on Thursday 4 July, Smith pleaded guilty to the offences and was sentenced to 40 months (three years and four months) imprisonment.

Following sentencing Police Constable Sian Doyle, of Warrington's Area Investigation Team, said: *"This result shows our continued zero tolerance of both illegal drug taking and supply across Warrington and, due to his own choices, Smith will now be facing over three years behind bars. I hope that Smith's conviction provides reassurance to local residents that police in Warrington are doing all we can to take illegal drugs off our streets and acts as a warning for any other dealers who are planning to do the same."*

Anyone with information or concerns in relation to drug dealing in your area is asked to report it to Cheshire Police via www.cheshire.police.uk/tell-us or call 101.

Multi-agency operation in Barthomley to target waste crime, stolen caravans and plant-machinery

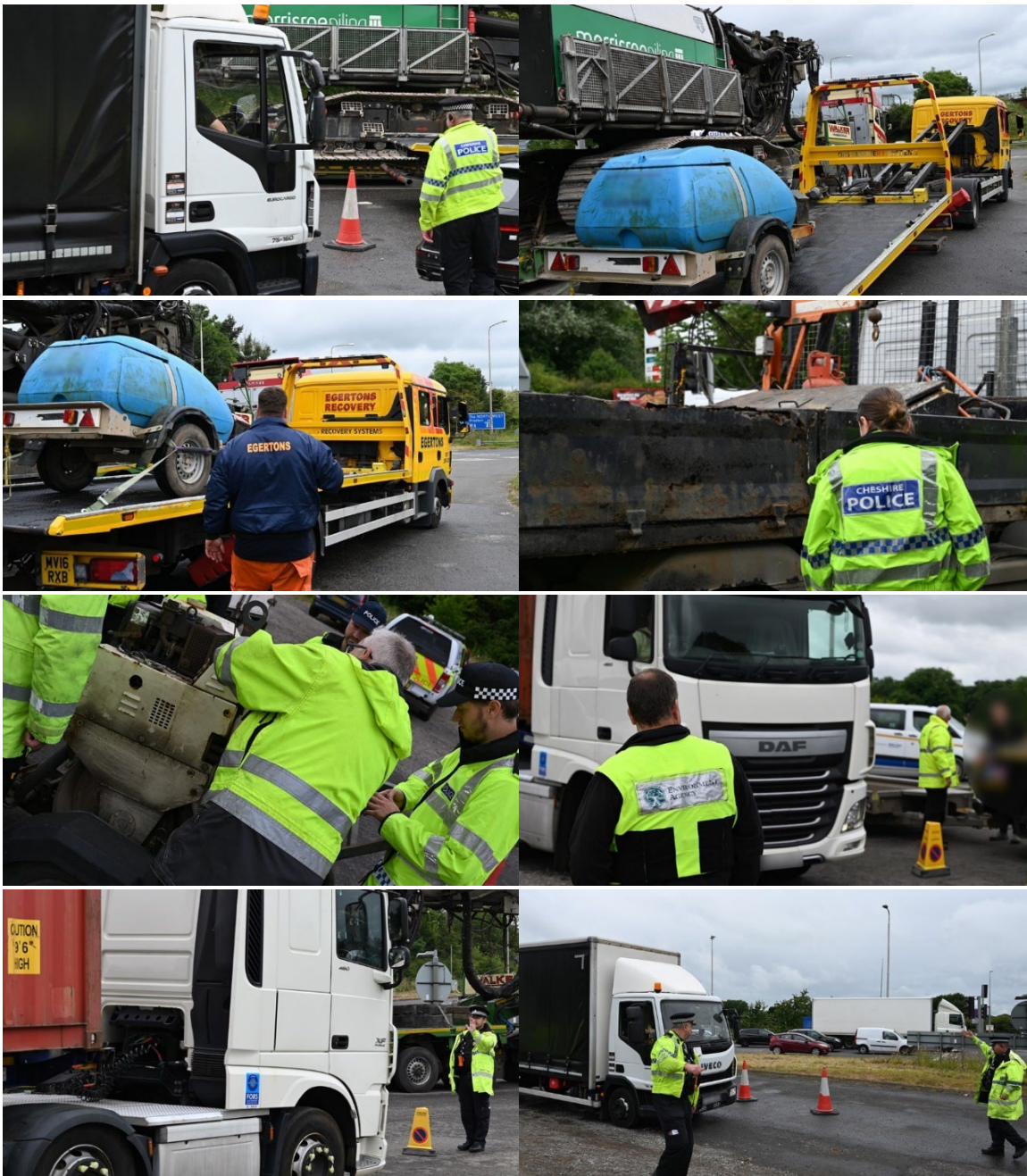
Multi-agency operation in Barthomley to target waste crime, stolen caravans and plant-machinery

Cheshire Constabulary's Rural Crime Team joined forces to target criminals in a day-long operation in Barthomley. On Monday 1 July, the team was joined at the Barthomley interchange off the A500 by Staffordshire Police, the Roads and Crime Unit, the Motorcycle Unit, Environment Agency, the National Rural Crime Unit's Lead Waste Officer, Datatag, the National Construction & Agricultural Theft Team, the specialist Regional Commercial Vehicle Unit, and the DVSA, to tackle waste crime and thefts of caravans and plant-machinery.

[Op Suckers \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpSuckers)

Everything from small commercial carriers to large HGVs were stopped to check if they were transporting waste, and if they had the necessary licences and paperwork to do so. Those towing caravans or plant-machinery were also stopped to make sure they were travelling safely and to check legitimacy. The operation is in response to a rise in fly tipping and thefts in and around the county of caravans and plant-machinery.





On the day, the teams stopped over 70 vehicles, resulting in the seizure of a stolen trailer & a high number of notices, tickets & summons to 38 people for a number of offences including overweight vehicles, untaxed vehicles, driving without insurance, and insecure loads.

Waste enforcement notices were also handed out to five drivers by the Environment Agency.





PC Peter Moss from Cheshire's Rural Crime Team said: "We've seen a rise in organised waste crime & the organised thefts of both caravans and plant-machinery so have been working with neighbouring forces to identify and track those stolen resulting in a number of recent seizures. This operation is just part of our efforts to tackle the issue, to make life difficult for thieves and Cheshire a hostile environment for organised crime. Those who were stopped understood why we did so and were thankful that we were out in the community being so proactive & vigilant. We've also been working with colleagues in other agencies to tackle the fly tipping in rural areas which is causing a misery to residents and farmers alike.

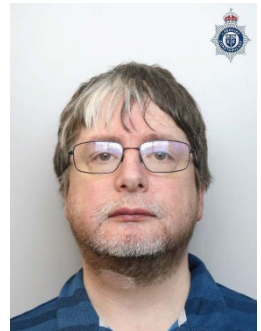
"There are a number of unscrupulous people out there who say they have a license to get rid of waste but have no intention of doing things correctly, often charging bargain prices to get rid of your rubbish, only for it to end up in a farmer's field or layby, which is a blight on the rural community. You can do your bit by making sure you use a legitimate waste removal company, don't be tempted by the cheap prices – if the waste is tracked down to you, what started off as a bargain could end up as a hefty fine, even if you weren't the one to dump the rubbish in that layby or field entrance. This operation highlights the fact we are working

together to deter these types of crime and goes as a warning to those intent on flouting the law that we're onto you."

Winsford man jailed for breaching Sexual Harm Prevention Order

A 47-year-old man from Winsford has been jailed after breaching his Sexual Harm Prevention Order (SHPO) by possessing nappies.

Gary McVeigh, of Delamere Street, was sentenced to two years and four months in prison at Chester Crown Court today, Friday 5 July. McVeigh was previously convicted of possessing and making indecent images of children in August 2016 and sentenced to two years imprisonment. He was also made subject to a Sexual Harm Prevention Order with a number of conditions, one of which prohibited McVeigh from possessing any nappies.



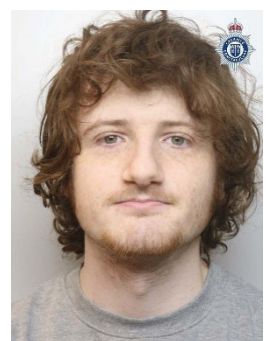
On 21 May 2024, officers attended McVeigh's address as part of the routine checks made to monitor registered sex offenders. During the visit, McVeigh was arrested for breaching his SHPO after officers became aware of three unregistered devices that McVeigh had hidden. Following an inspection of his bedroom, officers then found a large quantity of soiled nappies, as well as a quantity of unused nappies. He was again arrested on suspicion of breaching his SHPO. McVeigh was charged with three sexual harm breaches. He later pleaded guilty to the offences.

DC Helen Wrigley said: *"As a registered sex offender, McVeigh was required to adhere to a number of conditions to deter him from reoffending. An officer allocated to monitoring him visited his home address in May to ensure he was keeping to his conditions. Following a check of his mobile phone, the officer discovered an advert for nappies, and had reason to believe that McVeigh had started to offend again. The officer then searched his home address and found that McVeigh was in breach of his SHPO. This shows the effectiveness of monitoring offenders who are subject to Sexual Harm Prevention Orders and highlights the consequences of not adhering to the conditions. I hope it reassures people that we do carefully monitor registered sex offenders in the community and take action when a breach is discovered."*

Northwich man jailed after attempting to set fire to his own flat

A 23-year-old man from Northwich has been jailed for 21 months after setting light to a number of objects in his flat.

Jordan Donnelly appeared at Chester Court on Thursday 4 July where he was sentenced to 21 months in prison. The sentence comes after the 23-year-old of, Chapel Court, Northwich, pleaded guilty to threatening to destroy his own property, endangering life, at an earlier hearing.



The court heard that on 11 December 2023, Northwich police received a call from Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service reporting that a man had been setting fire to paper inside of his own address. Officers were told that Donnelly had been sending numerous abusive messages to family members, threatening to blow his flat up if they did not send him money. Donnelly even went as far as to send them videos of him setting fire to a number of items, including letters, the flat carpet, the sofa and his own underwear.

Attending the address, Donnelly was asked about the strong burning smell present, to which he responded that he had burnt some toast. However, a subsequent search of the address found numerous burnt pieces of

paper scattered across the flat and fire damage to the carpet and the sofa. There were no bread products or packaging present at the address.

Donnelly was promptly arrested and a search of his phone revealed more messages containing abusive language sent by him via Facebook Messenger. When presented with the opportunity to defend his actions, Donnelly answered no comment to all questions directed toward him when interviewed and was subsequently charged. Appearing at Chester Crown Court on Thursday 4 July he was sentenced to 21 months (one year and nine months) imprisonment in relation to threatening to destroy his own property, endangering life.

Following the sentencing, Detective Constable Alli Connolly said: *"Donnelly not only caused considerable stress to his own family through the sending of numerous threatening and abusive messages, but he also caused substantial damage to his own home, which was also a housing association-owned property. Today's sentencing shows our continued zero tolerance against any kind of threatening behaviour, and I hope this result provides reassurance to residents that our officers will always take swift action against perpetrators who insist on making others feel unsafe."*

Man jailed for drugs offences in Macclesfield

A drug dealer has been jailed after he was caught carrying thousands of pounds worth of drugs in Macclesfield.

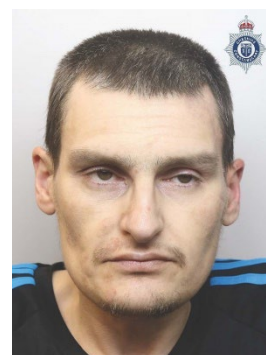
Paul Bradley, of Lyme Avenue, Macclesfield, appeared at Chester Crown Court on Monday 1 July where he was sentenced to four years. The 41-year-old had previously been found guilty of possession with intent to supply class A drugs.

On Thursday 2 November 2023, officers witnessed two men in an alleyway adjacent to London Road, Macclesfield, exchanging items. One of the men was identified as Bradley, who was stopped and searched on Old Mill Lane. A brown rock substance and a white rock substance were seized from him, as well as a mobile phone, and a knife. Bradley was subsequently arrested and later released under investigation pending further enquiries.

A few weeks later, on Friday 17 November, Bradley was sighted by officers on Jackson Street. As officers stated that he was detained for the purposes of a search, Bradley tried to flee the scene, before being stopped on Half Street. A search revealed Bradley was carrying a large quantity of cash, powdered substances, a rock substance, and a mobile phone. He was arrested and later charged in relation to drugs offences. Testing of the seized drugs revealed Bradley had been carrying heroin and cocaine. The potential combined street value of the drugs may have been worth up to more than £4,000.

PC Adam Archer, of Macclesfield Town Centre Neighbourhood Team, said: *"I welcome the significant custodial sentence handed to Bradley, and hope it encourages others who are intent on drug dealing in our community to think carefully about their actions. Bradley was carrying a large quantity of illegal drugs which would no doubt have been destined for our streets, but thankfully thousands of pounds worth of drugs were seized and destroyed as a result of officers proactively identifying someone who was up to no good. The harm drugs can have on communities cannot be underestimated, and I hope residents in the area will be reassured that we are doing all we can to stamp down on this behaviour."*

If you have any information about drug-related activity in your community, you can contact Cheshire Police through our website or by calling 101.



Two people arrested following Chester drugs raid

Officers from Chester have arrested two men following a drugs raid in the city.

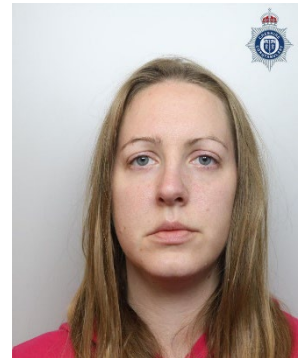
At around 6.15am on Friday 5 July, officers from Western Problem Solving team, with the assistance of Beat management team and Chester Proactive policing team, executed a warrant at an address on Sherbourne Avenue. During search of the address officers recovered a quantity of what is believed to be Class A drugs (cocaine), along with cash, a mobile phone and other drugs paraphernalia. Two men, aged 30 and 38, were arrested at the address on suspicion of being concerned in the supply of Class A drugs. The pair are both being held in custody where they are assisting officers with their enquiries.

Following the raid PC Dylan Rowe, from Western Problem Solving team, said: *"The warrant is part of our ongoing efforts to tack the supply of illegal drugs in Chester and I hope it provides reassurance to local residents. Drugs have a hugely detrimental impact on our communities, causing widespread misery. As such, cutting off supplies of illegal drugs and removing dealers from our streets is of paramount importance. As part of our efforts to bring those responsible to justice, we also need support from the local community. I would appeal to anyone who has any information about illegal drug activity or any other criminal activity taking place in their communities to contact us on 101, via the website or anonymously via Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111."*

Nurse sentenced for attempted murder of premature baby

A former neonatal nurse has been handed a whole life order for attempting to murder a newborn baby girl.

On Friday 5 July, Lucy Letby, formerly of Arran Avenue, Hereford, was sentenced during a hearing at Manchester Crown Court. Earlier last week the 34-year-old was convicted of attempting to murder the premature baby just hours after she was born.



In August 2023, Letby was sentenced to 14 whole life orders, after being convicted of the murder of seven babies and the attempted murder of six others at the Countess of Chester Hospital between 2015 and 2016. The jury failed to reach a verdict on an allegation of attempted murder of Baby K and a decision was taken to hold a re-trial. During the sentencing hearing Mr Justice Goss KC said that the impact of Letby's crimes has been immense. He said she had 'coldly denied any responsibility for any wrongdoing, had showed no remorse and there are no mitigating factors'.

Following the hearing, Deputy Senior Investigating Officer, Detective Chief Inspector Nicola Evans, said: *"Today, Lucy Letby has been handed another whole life order for attempting to murder a tiny, premature baby. This sentence once again reflects the true scale and gravity of her horrific crimes. It also highlights the torturous journey that Baby K's parents have had to endure at court – sitting and listening to extremely upsetting and distressing evidence about their newborn daughter – against constant denials from Letby. They have had to do this not once, but twice."*

"Nothing will take away the pain and suffering that they have had to experience but I hope that the significant sentence and the fact that Letby will spend the rest of her life behind bars will bring some comfort in their darkest hours. Baby K's mum showed unbelievable strength and courage today as she read out her victim impact statement to a packed court room – and in front of Letby. It was truly heartbreaking to listen to and is a stark reminder of the pain and suffering that she has had to endure – along with her husband – over a very long period of time. I would like to thank them for putting their trust in us and supporting this investigation – you are truly remarkable and will always have a place in our hearts."

Man charged in relation to drugs and modern day slavery offences

Officers investigating reports of drugs and modern day slavery offences have charged a man.

Kevin Ozemelam, of Bury Street, Salford, has been charged with being concerned in the supply of class A drugs (cocaine and MDMA), being concerned in the supply of class B drugs (ketamine and cannabis), assault by beating, and requiring a person to perform forced or compulsory labour. The 28-year-old was remanded in custody to appear at Chester Magistrates' Court on Thursday 4 July. He has now been remanded in custody to appear at Chester Crown Court on Thursday 1 August. The charges relate to an investigation into the sale of illegal drugs in the Chester area.

High value items recovered following burglary in Alderley Edge

Police have recovered a large quantity of designer goods and jewellery following a burglary in Alderley Edge.

On Monday 1 July, police were called to reports of a burglary at an address in Alderley Edge. The caller reported the incident took place at some time between Saturday 29 June and Monday 1 July. A large number of high value items were stolen during the burglary. Following enquiries, officers quickly executed a warrant at an address in Ashley Street, Hyde, where a number of the stolen items were recovered. A 52-year-old man and a 23-year-old man were arrested on suspicion of burglary and handling stolen goods. They have since been released on conditional bail.

Detective Sergeant Steve Joyce of Macclesfield CID said: *"Our investigation into this high value burglary began on Monday, and by Tuesday, we had identified two suspects who were quickly arrested. This is thanks to a team effort between a number of units within the force, including the Eastern Proactive team, Serious and Organised Crime team, and Forensics teams in Cheshire. We work closely with Greater Manchester Police and target cross border criminals committing crime in our county. This action highlights the effective teamwork and rapid action, resulting in the recovery of stolen goods for the victims."*

Man arrested as part of crackdown on illegal streaming services

Detectives from the Cheshire Police Cyber Crime Unit, with support of FACT, have arrested a man as part of an investigation into illegal online streaming services.

At around 9.30am on Wednesday 3 July officers conducted a warrant at an address in Widnes. A 51-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of fraud offences, possession of criminal property and possession of Class A drugs (cocaine). He had since been released under investigation pending further enquiries.

A number of electronic devices including computers, phones, and digital satellite television boxes were seized at the address, along with crypto-currency, cash and a small amount of drugs. These devices are currently undergoing further forensic examination with support from FACT.



Detective Constable Hannah Clement, a Specialist Cyber Investigator, said: *"While many people think that illegal streaming is a victimless crime, that is simply not the case. It causes an enormous loss to the*

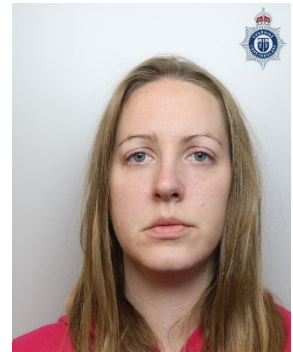
entertainment industry and is also unfair that millions of people work hard to afford their subscription-only TV services while others cheat the system. In addition, by using illegal streaming services, you also increase the risk of receiving malicious software, which gives criminals access to your network and can compromise your personal data. I hope that this warrant acts as a warning to those who knowingly commit or facilitate online copyright infringement."

To find out about the dangers of illegal streaming visit www.bestreamwise.com. Anyone with any information in relation to the sale, distribution, or promotion of illegal streaming devices is urged to contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111, or visit www.crimestoppers-uk.org.

Nurse found guilty of attempting to murder premature baby

A former neonatal nurse has been convicted of trying to harm a tiny, premature baby just hours after she was born.

Lucy Letby, formerly of Arran Avenue, Hereford, has been found guilty of the attempted murder of the newborn baby girl as she was being cared for at the Countess of Chester Hospital. The 34-year-old will be sentenced on Friday 5 July. In August 2023, Letby was sentenced to 14 whole life orders, after being convicted of the murder of seven babies and the attempted murder of six others at the Countess of Chester Hospital between 2015 and 2016. The jury failed to reach a verdict on an allegation of attempted murder of Baby K and a decision was taken to hold a re-trial.



Speaking after the verdict today, Detective Chief Inspector Nicola Evans, who is the Deputy Senior Investigating Officer, said: *"This has been a long and painful journey for the parents of Baby K – having to face continual denials and sitting through very personal and upsetting evidence in the original trial and again at the re-trial. Their courage, strength and resilience is absolutely remarkable.*

"I would like to thank them for continuing to put their faith in us and I hope that the conclusion today provides them with some peace of mind and some of the answers they have been searching for. Once again, there are no winners in this case. Today is not a time for celebration – it is a time for reflection and a time for the family of Baby K. My thoughts – and those of the whole prosecution team – remain with them at this incredibly difficult time."

In court it was heard that Baby K had been born in the early hours of 17 February 2016 at 25 weeks gestation at the Countess of Chester Hospital. She was transferred to the neonatal unit. During the prosecution case it was argued that on the night in question shortly after her designated nurse had left her side Letby had dislodged Baby K's breathing tube – just hours after she was born.

A senior doctor who worked on the unit said he had entered the nursery that night to find Letby standing over the baby's incubator. Her blood oxygen levels were dropping, no alarm was sounding and Letby was doing nothing. The prosecution stated that Letby had deliberately interfered with the baby's ET tube intending to kill the newborn. The defence argued that there was no evidence to suggest Letby had inflicted harm on Baby K – and that she had been waiting for the baby to self-correct. During her own evidence, Letby said she had no intention of harming the newborn and had no recollection of what happened that night.

The little girl was subsequently transferred out of the neonatal unit to a specialist hospital due to her extreme prematurity. She sadly died three days later although it was not the prosecution case that Letby had caused her death.

At the start of the re-trial an emotional statement was read out on behalf of Baby K's mum followed by a sequence of events, prepared by one of Cheshire Constabulary's intelligence analysts. This set the scene and

focused on Baby K's journey from birth and her time in the neonatal unit until she was transferred out. The sequence captured what happened and when in terms of staff movements on the ward, which babies were on the unit at the time, how they were monitored and the treatment they received. It also captured conversations during this time between Letby and other staff members via WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger – along with a search that Letby was carrying out on Facebook for the surname of Baby K.

Letby claimed she had no recollection of why she was searching for this more than two years after Baby K died. She also denied ever having murdered babies or intending to harm any newborn in her care at the Countess of Chester hospital. After a trial spanning 10 days the jury dismissed Letby's version of events and agreed that she was responsible for attempting to murder Baby K.

DCI Evans added: *"A trained nurse responsible for caring and protecting a tiny, premature baby abused that position of trust in the most unthinkable way. The continued denials have caused significant upset for Baby K's family as they have had to endure a trial and subsequent re-trial. No-one should ever have to go through what they experienced."*

In early May 2017, The Countess of Chester Hospital Foundation Trust contacted Cheshire Constabulary regarding neonatal services at the hospital. This was in relation to a greater number of baby deaths and non-fatal collapses than normally expected during the period of June 2015 and June 2016. As a result, Cheshire Constabulary launched an investigation called Operation Hummingbird. As time went on and further information came to light the scope of the investigation widened and further cases were reviewed.

As work continued behind the scenes to gather evidence, a suspect was formally identified and on 3 July 2018 Letby was arrested at her home in Chester. She was taken into custody and interviewed by detectives and was subsequently bailed pending further enquiries. This was followed by two further arrests – one in June 2019 and another in November 2020 – before subsequently being charged.

Detective Superintendent Simon Blackwell, who is strategic lead on the investigation, said: *"This has been a highly complex and extremely sensitive investigation over the past seven years and I want to say thank you to the whole investigation team in recognition of all of their dedication and hard work."*

"I want to acknowledge each and every person who has been involved – from our dedicated officers and staff who built a detailed case that resulted in a charge, to the witnesses who were integral in giving their evidence at court, to the prosecution team who devoted their time to this case and finally to the jury who have had to sit through complex and, at times, very distressing and upsetting evidence before delivering their verdict."

"Our case has also been strongly supported by a number of key partners to which we are also very grateful including the Crown Prosecution Service, Prosecution Counsel, The National Crime Agency and colleagues from other forces. Everyone has had a part to play and we owe a debt of gratitude to you all."

If you have any information that you would like to pass onto the investigation team please get in touch via the Operation Hummingbird mailbox at Operation.Hummingbird.Public.Contact@cheshire.police.uk Information can also be passed on by calling 101 and asking for Cheshire Constabulary or anonymously, via Crimestoppers, on 0800 555 111.

Two people arrested following drugs warrant in Warrington

Officers from Warrington Neighbourhood Policing Unit have arrested two people following a drugs raid in Bewsey and Whitecross.

At around 3.30pm on Monday 1 July, officers executed a warrant at an address on Whitecross Road. A 39-year-old man and a 46-year-old woman were arrested at the address on suspicion of possession with intent to supply a controlled Class B drug. Officers also recovered a number of items, including controlled drugs, mobile phones and other drugs paraphernalia. The woman has since been released on bail, while the man remains in police custody at this time.

Inspector Lee Hillyard, of Warrington Neighbourhood Policing Team, said: *"Today's warrant is part of our ongoing efforts to tack the supply of illegal drugs in Warrington and I hope it provides reassurance to local residents. Drugs have a hugely detrimental impact on our communities, causing widespread misery. As such, cutting off supplies of illegal drugs and removing dealers from our streets is of paramount importance. As part of our efforts to bring those responsible to justice, we also need support from the local community."*

"I would appeal to anyone who has any information about illegal drug activity or any other criminal activity taking place in their communities to contact us on 101, via the website or anonymously via Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111."

Fatal five under the spotlight in Cheshire

Cheshire Constabulary is looking to shine the spotlight on the 'fatal five' this month to help tackle the number of serious and fatal collisions. Across the UK, July typically sees the highest number of fatal and serious collisions, many of which are caused by the one of the fatal five offences -

- Careless driving
- Drink and drug driving
- Not wearing a seatbelt
- Using a mobile phone
- Speeding



To help tackle the issue and help reduce the number of serious and fatal collisions, Cheshire Constabulary is taking part in Operation Spotlight. The operation, which got underway on Monday 1 July, is a national operation which is aimed at educating road users about the dangers of the fatal five.

Chief Inspector John Forshaw, of the Roads and Crime Unit at Cheshire Police, said: *"This operation is about engaging with as many road users as possible, promoting road safety, and enforcing road traffic legislation where necessary and proportionate. We want all road users to think about how they drive, consider the conditions of the road and assess their surroundings to help reduce the risk of serious and fatal collisions. Fatal collisions are heart-breaking. They are heart-breaking for the family, heart-breaking for the community, and heart-breaking for the responding emergency services staff who have to witness the tragedy and subsequent aftermath – all made worse knowing that many could have been prevented. We want people to think about how they use the road network and how they can do it safely."*

As well as educating road users, officers from the Roads and Crime Unit will also be undertaking additional enforcement activity throughout the month, specifically targeting motorists breaching the fatal five offences.

Inspector Anton Sullivan, of the Cheshire Police's Roads and Crime Unit, added: *"We are always extremely proactive in our approach to tackling offending motorists and are committed to doing all we can to make our roads safer for everyone. We do not simply do this for the sake of it, we do it to save people's lives. It is crucial we engage with and educate motorists on how to use the roads safely - and enforce the law when they are not. If you speed in Cheshire, or commit any of the other Fatal five offences, we will take action."*

Facial recognition technology helps to identify Northwich drug dealers

Two men have been jailed for county lines drug dealing thanks facial recognition technology and the work by officers from Northwich Proactive Policing Unit.

Keenan Hughes and Vincent Potter appeared at Chester Crown Court on Monday 1 July where they were sentenced to more than five years in prison. Hughes, 18, of Cable Street, Connah's Quay, was sentenced to 28 months behind bars having previously pleaded guilty to possession with intent to supply Class A drugs (crack cocaine) and possession of a knife in a public place. Potter, 19, of no fixed abode was jailed for 34 months having previously admitted possession with intent to supply Class A drugs (crack cocaine), possession of criminal property and possession of a knife in a public place.



The investigation initially began in April 2024 when officers became aware of a mobile phone number which was being used to sell drugs in the local area by the Kyle County Lines gang. Following further enquiries, officers recovered CCTV footage an unknown man who was suspected to be one of the men using the phone. The image was submitted to the force facial recognition system and came through as a match to a man called Keenan Hughes from Connah's Quay.

On Friday 17 May, officers on patrol in the local area spotted Hughes walking along Winnington Street, with Potter, and both men were stopped and searched by officers. Hughes was found in possession of 99 individual wraps of crack cocaine, worth approximately £990, along with a hunting style knife. Potter was found to have two mobile phones, a lock knife and £960 cash. Both men were subsequently arrested for drugs offences and possession of a knife in a public place.

During questioning both men refused to answer any questions in relation to drugs offences, answering no comment to the majority of the questions put to them. However, when analysing one of the phones seized from Potter, officers discovered several messages indicating that the phone was being used to sell illegal drugs. Despite their silence, both men were charged with possession with intent to supply Class A drugs (crack cocaine), possession of criminal property and possession of a knife in a public place.

Following the hearing, Police Constable Dean Butterworth, of Northwich Proactive Policing Team, said: *"This is a great example of how technology can make a real difference in modern day policing. Hughes was not known in the Northwich area, but thanks to the CCTV footage and facial recognition technology, we were quickly able to identify him as a suspect. As a result of this information and the work of the team here at Northwich Proactive Policing Team, another two drug dealers have been removed from the streets of our town and both men are facing time behind bars. I welcome the sentences handed to the pair and I hope that their conviction provides reassurance to local residents and acts as a warning for any other dealers who are planning to target the Northwich area."*

Anyone with information or concerns in relation to drug dealing in the Northwich area is asked to report it to Cheshire Police via www.cheshire.police.uk/tell-us or call 101.

Cheshire Police combat romance fraud with an online Peer Support Group session

Action Fraud, the UK's reporting centre for fraud and cybercrime, states that romance fraud has seen a significant rise, with 8,710 victims in 2023 alone. The true number is likely much higher.

Cheshire Police are taking a stand against romance fraud, continuing the success of the Peer Support Group offering a safe space for victims. Romance fraud thrives on shame and silence. Victims, often deceived by online relationships, hesitate to come forward due to stigma. Cheshire Police's innovative Peer Support Group tackles this head-on. This confidential online space allows victims to:

- Share experiences with others who understand.
- Find support and begin healing.
- Move forward from the emotional impact.

Romance fraud, where unsuspecting victims are deceived by someone pretending to be in a relationship with them online, is a growing problem. The shame and stigma associated with the crime often prevent victims from coming forward. Cheshire Police's Peer Support Group aims to address this stigma. The confidential online group provides a space for victims to share their experiences, find support from others who have been through similar situations, and begin the healing process.

Police Constable Jim Day, of the Economic Crime Unit, at Cheshire Police, said: *"We hope this group will empower victims to talk openly and rebuild their trust. By providing peer support, we can help them overcome the emotional and financial impact of this crime. We should move away from telling and rescuing, to listening and enabling. We need to create the right conditions for our victims to be heard and understood as they are more likely to reveal their true fears and concerns, which will lead them to make changes for themselves."*

As well as supporting victims, Cheshire Constabulary remains committed to doing all we can to help eradicating romance fraud. Calli Wilkinson, a Fraud Investigator at Cheshire Police, is leading efforts to develop educational campaigns aimed at reducing the risk of fraud. By identifying target groups, common tactics, and manipulative language used by fraudsters, these campaigns will empower communities and make it harder for scammers to operate. To find out more about current fraud trends in Cheshire, follow the Cheshire Police Fraud and Cybercrime Team Facebook page.

Detective Inspector Helen Rowlands, head of the Economic Crime Unit, at Cheshire Police, added: *"Romance fraud can have devastating consequences and we are committed to doing all we can to tackle the issue and support those who have been victims to such unscrupulous criminals. I would like to commend the work undertaken by PC Day and Calli, which is making a real difference by helping to improve the lives of victims and make our communities safer."*

If you suspect you've been a victim of romance fraud, contact your bank immediately and report it to Action Fraud at <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/> or by calling 0300 123 2040.

Latest Cheshire Appeals

Police appeal for help in tracing wanted Macclesfield man

Police are appealing for help in tracing a wanted man from Macclesfield.

Ashley Searle, 33, is wanted in relation to harassment offences. He is described as white, around 6ft 2ins tall, of proportionate build, with brown hair and blue eyes. Searle is also believed to have links to Congleton.

Anyone who sees Searle or has any information regarding his whereabouts is asked to contact Cheshire Constabulary on 101, quoting IML 1737056 or via www.cheshire.police.uk/tell-us Information can also be reported online to



Crimestoppers anonymously via <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information/forms/give-information-anonymously> or by calling 0800 555 111.

Police appeal for witnesses after wheelie bin set on fire near properties in Widnes

Police are appealing for witnesses following a deliberate fire in a wheelie bin in Widnes.

Sometime between 9.10am and 9.45am on Monday 1 July a wheelie bin was set on fire under a canopy between two properties in Wright Crescent. A young male alerted the occupant of one of the properties who then called the fire service. The male is described as white, slim, wearing dark clothing and a balaclava.

DC Nathaniel Walkowiak said: *"The fire caused damage to the canopy and put the residents at real risk of harm. We'd like to hear from anyone who was in the area at the time and may have seen anyone hanging around or acting suspiciously between those times so we can find those responsible."*

Anyone with information should contact Cheshire Police on 101 or via the [website](#) quoting IML 1860243. Alternatively information can be given anonymously by contacting Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Association (CNWA)

c/o Corporate Comms | Cheshire Constabulary HQ | Clemonds Hey | Oakmere Road | Winsford | Cheshire | CW7 2UA

Email: cheshirenw@outlook.com

Website: <https://www.cheshirenw.org>

Facebook: facebook.com/groups/cheshirenw



In partnership with



To find out further information about the Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Association, to log into your account or for Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Literature please visit our website: www.cheshirenw.org