

Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Association

Week ending 5 July 2026

Cheshire News & Appeals

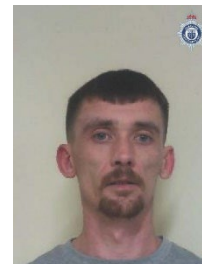


Latest Cheshire News

Two men plead guilty to Pokemon thefts - gotta catch 'em all!

Two brothers have admitted stealing more than £71,000 worth of stock from shops specialising in collectable Pokémon cards.

Keith Johnson, 33, from Brookwood Avenue, Birmingham appeared at Birmingham Crown Court on 2 July after pleading guilty to two counts of burglary with intent to steal at an earlier hearing. He was sentenced to 29 months in prison. His accomplice, Shane Johnson, 37, of no fixed address admitted the same offences and will be sentenced at Birmingham Crown Court on 31 July.



On the evening of 8 April 2026, the pair targeted Celestial Collectables on Lovely Lane in Warrington. The shop specialises in rare and high value Pokémon trading cards along with memorabilia and other condition items which are limited in numbers or rare to collectors. Police were alerted to the break-in following reports the shop door window was being smashed and the shop was being ransacked. On arrival officers entered the shop through the broken doorway and discovered Pokémon cards strewn across the floor. Crime Scene Investigators recovered a crowbar from the scene which had been used to smash the glass in the front door and smash shelving and cabinets. The items stolen were mainly Pokémon cards to the value of £62,000 and damaged caused to the shop itself was in excess of £3,000. CCTV showed a white Ford transit van was the vehicle used in the burglary but was on cloned number plates.

Further enquiries revealed the van had travelled from Birmingham to Warrington on the day of the burglary. Prior to this it had been captured parked up outside Keith's address. This was later found following the burglary on East Avenue in Stockton Heath with a number of Pokémon cards, a box with the shops logo on it along with tools and items for going equipped to a burglary. CCTV enquiries showed that the van had broken down and the brothers had to push the van along London Road in Warrington onto East Avenue where there was another waiting van which had travelled up from Birmingham. They transferred their haul into the other van which was later found parked up near Shane's address.

The brothers then struck at The Graded Gallery in Rugby and again they used a crowbar to break into the shop and cause significant damage to the interior as they stole various items including Pokémon cards. They then left in the Nissan X-Trail. The total stock stolen and damaged caused was more than £9,000. Following the burglary West Midlands Police informed Cheshire colleagues that another burglary had taken place in Warwickshire and the Nissan X-Trail involved in the burglary was parked outside Keith's. West Midlands officers attended the address to arrest the two men, and a search of the property recovered the keys to the van used in the Warrington burglary along with stolen property belonging to Celestial Collectables along with the keys to the Nissan X-Trail and more stole property from other commercial burglaries. The clothes they were wearing at the

time of the Warrington burglary, including Shane's trainers were also recovered when the men were arrested.

DC Hannah Smith said: *"The overwhelming evidence collected through our extensive enquiries put them at both crime scenes giving them no choice but to plead guilty. The brothers will now have to pay the price for their part in their criminal Pokémon enterprise."*

Man charged with drugs offences in Crewe

A man has been charged in relation to drugs offences in Crewe.

Nial Smith, 30, of Stewart Street, Crewe, has been charged with being concerned in the supply of cocaine and possession with intent to supply cocaine. He has been remanded in custody to appear at Chester Crown Court on Tuesday 11 August. The charges relate to an investigation into drugs offences in the Crewe area.

Say hello to our newest canine recruit!

Police Dog Enzo is Cheshire Constabulary Dog Unit's newest qualified police dog.

PD Enzo, who is working alongside his handler PC Kate Sheehan, successfully completed his intensive training course this week and is now officially licensed as a General Purpose Dog. After weeks of hard work, commitment and professionalism from PC Sheehan, Enzo is ready to take to the streets of Cheshire and play his part in keeping our communities safe by helping to make Cheshire a hostile place for criminals.



Inspector Nick Bamber said: *"PC Sheehan has worked tirelessly to meet the demanding standards required in this specialist area of policing. What's often unseen is the level of skill and discipline required of our handlers, who train continuously, maintain rigorous operational standards and undergo regular re-licensing. Every deployment is the product of a wider team effort, from the handler on the ground to the specialist trainers and kennel staff whose expertise ensures our dogs work safely, lawfully and effectively. Our specialist training team's professionalism and dedication has been central to Enzo and Kate's development so I'd like to take this opportunity to thank them for all their hard work in training up another formidable crimefighting team."*

Drug dealer told to pay back more than £31,000

A man who funded a lavish lifestyle by drug dealing in Crewe has been ordered to pay back thousands of pounds.

Lee James, 39, [was sentenced to seven years at Chester Crown Court](#) on Thursday 5 February 2026. James had pleaded guilty to being concerned in the supply of cocaine and cannabis, possession of criminal property, and converting criminal property. As part of the investigation into James' criminal activities, numerous items were seized from his address, including a large quantity of designer clothing, footwear, handbags, watches and perfumes. A Restraint Order under the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) was previously obtained to secure these assets for any future

confiscation. Since James' sentencing, it has now been determined that his agreed criminal benefit was £908,684. Of this, £31,555 is available to be paid back under a POCA Confiscation Order.

DS Williams said: *"James did not give a second thought as to where his money came from and used it to buy high value items and fund a lavish lifestyle. It did not matter to him about the impact that illegal drugs have on our communities, but thanks to the hard work of our officers he was held accountable for his behaviour and put behind bars. Drugs were taken off the streets, and his belongings were seized. But the hard work didn't stop there. While James has been serving his prison sentence, officers have been working tirelessly to ensure that he can no longer benefit from his criminality after he is released. He will now have to pay back all available assets that were earned through criminal means - a great result which highlights another tool we have at our disposal to ensure those who choose to commit crime feel the full force of the law."*

Man ordered to pay back thousands of pounds of criminal gains

A drug dealer from Winsford has been ordered to pay back more than £88,000 under the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA).

Joshua Furmedge, 32, [was originally handed a six-and-a-half-year sentence](#) at Liverpool Crown Court on Friday 5 July 2024. He had been found guilty of possession with intent to supply cocaine and possession of criminal property following a trial in May 2024. It has since been determined that Furmedge benefited to the value of £350,000 due to his criminal enterprise. Of this, £88,230.43 is available to be paid back under a POCA Confiscation Order. This includes cash, designer items, jewellery, vehicles and funds held across various bank accounts.

Detective Inspector Helen Williams said: *"When we first searched Furmedge's address during the original investigation into his crimes, a large amount of cash and a number of high value lifestyle items were recovered. He was already clearly reaping the benefits of his behaviour, and he probably thought this could continue after he was released from prison. But we've worked hard to put a stop to this and ensure he pays back all of the available assets. This is a great example of the lengths we will go to in order to target those who have profited from crime and ensure that when they are released from prison, they can no longer benefit from wealth earned through criminal means."*

Man jailed following burglaries in Congleton and Sandbach

A man has been jailed after he pleaded guilty to a string of offences across Congleton and Sandbach.

Dominic Graham appeared at Chester Crown Court on Friday 19 June where he was sentenced to three years and nine months in prison. The 35-year-old of Loachbrook Farm Way, Congleton, had previously pleaded guilty to two counts of burglary, two counts of fraud by false representation and possession of class B drugs (cannabis).

<https://youtu.be/IS6h1kZBxDU>

Graham's crime spree began during the early hours of Tuesday 6 January when he broke into the staff area of Waitrose on Flat Lane, Sandbach. Once inside he stole a handbag belonging to a member of staff. Within the bag was a purse and the keys to a white Ford Kuga. He then stole the

car and fled the scene. The stolen purse was later recovered on the car park and sent for forensic analysis where officers found traces of Graham's blood. The stolen car was also located approximately one mile away, with forensic analysis showing traces of Graham's DNA on the steering wheel.

Then, on Saturday 28 January, a resident on Heathfield Road, Congleton was contacted by his bank in relation to suspicious activity on his card. The man conducted a search of his address and realised that the patio doors were open, and his wallet had been stolen. The incident was reported to police, and following enquiries officers were able to identify via CCTV footage that Graham had stolen the cards and made approximately £100 worth of fraudulent purchases.

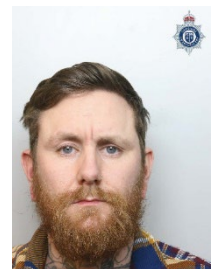
Enquiries were undertaken to locate Graham, but he was actively evading officers. Despite his best efforts, he was traced to a hotel in Macclesfield and arrested Tuesday 24 March by officers who were waiting in his room. Following his arrest, officers found he was in possession of a quantity of cannabis. During questioning, Graham answered no comment to all the questions put to him by officers. Despite his silence he was later charged in relation to the incidents.

Following the sentencing Detective Constable Jamie Roberts, of Congleton Proactive CID, said: *"I welcome the sentence handed to Graham and I hope that it provides reassurance to the victims in the case. During our investigation it was clear from the early stages that Graham was the culprit, but he thought that he could outsmart police and by playing hide and seek. Unfortunately for him, through our dedicated team of officers in our Serious and Organised Crime Unit, we were quickly able to trace him to a hotel in Macclesfield, where we waited to surprise him when he returned to his room. Following his arrest, he realised that the game was up and had no option but to admit his guilt in court."*

Runcorn man jailed for raping a woman

A Runcorn man has been jailed for raping a woman.

Dewi Jones from The Copse in Runcorn was sentenced at Liverpool Crown Court on 26 June after being found guilty of rape following a trial. The 36-year-old was jailed for seven years. He was also given an indefinite restraining order and ordered to sign the sex offenders register. The court heard that in 2024 he had orally raped the woman and restricted her breathing, that she was terrified and that she thought she was going to die. Despite her protestations he refused to stop and she had to fight him off. Jones then went on to mock her and blame her.



DC Kelsie Sherratt said: *"Despite the overwhelming evidence in text messages back and forth on her terrifying ordeal and his general behaviour towards her, Jones still went to trial forcing the victim to relive the experience in court. The jury saw through his lies, and he was given a significant sentence for his despicable and dangerous behaviour."*

Police deliver training to bus companies to help spot signs of child exploitation

Cheshire Constabulary has delivered training to bus companies across the county to help drivers spot the signs of child exploitation on transport networks.

Officers delivered training to safeguarding leads from Warrington's Own Buses and Stagecoach in Chester and Crewe to help protect vulnerable children who may be at risk. The companies will in turn be delivering this training to their drivers across the county to help them spot the signs of exploitation and, where necessary, swiftly alert police to intervene prior to any young person coming to harm. The partnership is part of Operation Makesafe – a national campaign aimed at raising awareness of child exploitation, including criminal and sexual, in the business community.



Superintendent Chris Williams, from the Protecting Vulnerable People Team, said: *"Child exploitation is a crime with devastating and long lasting consequences for its victims and their families. Childhoods and family life can be ruined and this is compounded when victims do not receive appropriate, immediate and on-going support. By providing this training we can empower staff to spot the signs, help vulnerable children get the support they need as soon as possible and ensure criminals face the consequences of their actions. Last year, the Constabulary also visited hotels throughout Cheshire to deliver child exploitation training, and we are currently in the process of revisiting this. We are also offering to deliver this training to any companies in Cheshire who would like to receive it. Please contact HR.Learning.And.Development@cheshire.police.uk for more details."*

David Longmate, Operations/Transport Manager at Warrington's Own Buses, said: *"I certainly found the session really valuable, and the presentation will be hugely beneficial for us to take forward."*

Matt Gannon, Operation Manager for Stagecoach, said: *"My team really enjoyed the session and learnt a huge amount. This is hugely important to us to protect children using our buses."*

Chester man jailed for online child sex offences

A man from Chester has been jailed for over 5 years after engaging in online child sex offences.

Nicholas Jones appeared at Chester Crown Court on Monday 29 June where he was sentenced to 5 years and 3 months in prison, with an extended licence period of 5 years. On top of the custodial sentence, Jones, of Canal Side, Chester, was also ordered to sign on to the Sex Offender's Register indefinitely. The sentencing comes after Jones pleaded guilty to:

- four counts of making an indecent photograph of a child;
- two counts of attempting to engage in sexual communications with a child;
- two counts of attempting to incite a child under 13 to engage in sexual activity;
- distributing an indecent photograph of a child;
- attempting to cause a child to watch a sexual act;
- and the breach of a Sexual Harm Prevention Order.



Jones also pleaded guilty to possession of cannabis.

Over the course of his hearing, Chester Crown Court was told that Jones had been handed a Sexual Harm Prevention Order following a conviction in 2019. Under the terms of this order, he was prohibited to have any unsupervised contact with anyone under 16, installing encryption software or deleting data and history on any of his devices.

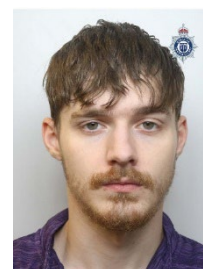
On Tuesday 2 January 2026, Cheshire police were contacted by a person claiming that Jones had been engaging with a decoy account of a 12-year-old girl they had created. The reporting person went on to say Jones set up a social media account to talk to the 'child', had attempted to engage in sexual communication with them and sent several sexualised pictures and videos to them. Officers swiftly attended Jones' address and promptly arrested him. Whilst inside the property, Jones pointed out to officers a quantity of cannabis as well as an unregistered mobile phone. He told officers that they would find "loads of pictures on his phone." Upon reviewing the phone, Digital Forensics Officers found over 320 child sexual abuse images stored on the device. Despite answering no comment to all questions put to him in interview, the 55-year-old was charged with the offences.

Police Constable David Howells, of the Sex Offender Management Unit, said: *"Despite being handed a Sexual Harm Prevention Order following a previous conviction for similar offences, Nicholas Jones clearly had not learnt his lesson and, following the report made to us, we took immediate action against him. Jones knew his actions were exploitative and downright illegal so, when faced with our officers, he was left with no choice but to admit to them that he had a large quantity of these abhorrent images on an unregistered personal device. Our officers from the Sex Offender's Management Unit regularly conduct visits to offenders who, like Jones, pose a serious risk to the community and are subject to preventative orders to ensure they are complying with the conditions within them. When any breaches of these orders are found, swift and decisive action is taken in order to protect the most vulnerable in our society."*

Man jailed for drug dealing in Middlewich

A man has been jailed after he pleaded guilty to dealing illegal drugs in Middlewich.

Harrison Hayes, of Grasmere Drive, Bury, appeared at Chester Crown Court on Wednesday 1 July where he was sentenced to two years and eight months in prison. The 24-year-old had previously pleaded guilty to possession with intent to supply class A and B drugs (cocaine and cannabis), being concerned in the supply of class A and B drugs (cocaine and cannabis) and acquiring ammunition without a certificate.



The court heard how Hayes had previously resided at an address on Dale Court in Middlewich with his partner. In early 2025 police received intelligence suggesting that the address was linked to drugs offences and a warrant was executed at the property on Monday 28 April 2025. During the raid officers located several bags of cannabis, wraps of cocaine, digital scales, and other drugs paraphilia. A mobile phone was also recovered, which was later found to contain messages relating to the sale of cannabis and cocaine. Concerningly, officers also recovered a knuckleduster and several prohibited ammunition cartridges. Hayes was arrested at the address and taken to police

custody. During questioning he answer no comment to all the questions put to him by officers. Despite his silence, he was later charged with drugs offences.

Following the sentencing, Police Constable Adam Archer, of Congleton LPU, said: *"I welcome the sentence handed to Hayes and I hope that it acts as a warning to others. Illegal drugs have a devastating impact on our communities, and we're committed to doing all we can to identify those responsible and ensure they are held accountable for their actions. While Hayes is now behind bars, our fight against illegal drugs remains ongoing. We will always act on any information about drug activity provided to us and would urge anyone who believes this activity is happening near to them, to please contact us on 101 or visit www.cheshire.police.uk/tell-us."*

Three men charged with drugs offences in Runcorn

Detectives investigating the supply of illegal drugs in Runcorn have charged three men.

Kieran Banks, Karl Morgan and John Ungi were all arrested on Monday 29 June as part of an investigation by Runcorn Beat Team. Following questioning all three men have since been charged with two counts of conspiracy to supply class B drugs (cannabis and amphetamine). Banks, 34, of Juniper Grove, Runcorn; Morgan, 38, of Village Square, Castlefields, Runcorn; and Ungi, 36 of Downside, Widnes, have all been remanded in custody and are set to appear at Chester Magistrates Court on Wednesday 1 July.

Man charged with exposure offences in Macclesfield

A man from Greater Manchester has been charged with exposure offences.

Jamie Hatrill was arrested at around 9am on Tuesday 30 June in the Somerton Park area of Macclesfield. The 34-year-old, of Corporation Road, Tameside, has since been charged with exposure. Hatrill has been conditionally bailed to appear at Crewe Magistrates' Court on Saturday 8 September. The charges relate to an incident that occurred in the Somerton Park area of Macclesfield at around 8.20am on Tuesday 30 June.

Man sentenced for voyeurism in Widnes

A man has been sentenced after he secretly recorded four children in a changing cubicle at a leisure centre in Widnes.

Ian Tabron appeared at Warrington Magistrates' Court on Tuesday 23 June, where he was sentenced to four months in prison suspended for one year. He is also required to sign the Sex Offenders' Register for seven years. The 40-year-old of Top Road, Frodsham, had earlier pleaded guilty to voyeurism.



The court heard how police were called to Halton Leisure Centre on Tuesday 19 May, following reports from staff that a man had tried to secretly recorded four children in a changing cubicle. Officers attended and spoke to the children involved. They stated that after using the swimming pool, they went into a changing cubicle. While inside, they noticed a hand reaching under the door holding a phone, which appeared to be recording them. The children notified their friends and the

man started to walk away. He was confronted by staff but quickly made off from the scene. Following CCTV enquiries, officers identified the man to be Tabron. He was swiftly arrested and subsequently charged with voyeurism.

Detective Sergeant Chris Murphy said: *"I'd like to commend the children involved in this incident for recognising this incredibly concerning behaviour and raising these concerns with a member of staff. Their quick-thinking allowed our officers to swiftly arrest and apprehend a man who clearly poses a significant risk to children. Tabron knew what he was doing was unacceptable and predatory, but this didn't stop him from violating the privacy and safety of four innocent children. I can only hope he learns from this incident, knowing that our officers will stop at nothing to ensure those that pose a danger to children are arrested, charged, and put before the courts."*

NPCC Statement - England fans performing better away than at home as World Cup reaches half time

The head of UK Football Policing has once again praised England fans in America for their behaviour during the tournament stage of the 2026 World Cup.

As we reach the conclusion of the group stage of the World Cup and look forward to the knockout games, the behaviour of England fans at the tournament continues to be excellent. While there have been several incidents involving fans from other countries, there have been no reports of any violence or disorder involving England or Scotland fans. To date there have been five arrests for minor matters involving England supporters in the US, not all linked to games. These include –

- One for theft from a shop (*Not football related but involving an England fan*)
- One for a motor vehicle incident – breaking in and assault on a valet (*Not football related but involving an England fan*)
- Two unauthorised entries to the stadium at New Jersey – both stopped and arrested
- One arrest for being drunk & disorderly (*arrested for his own safety.*)

All the men have been released by the American Authorities and referred to the UKFPU (UK Football Policing Unit).

Unfortunately, the picture is not the same in the UK. As of Monday 29 June, there had been 463 football related incidents in England and Wales, which is significantly higher than this stage in Euro 2024 (304) and the 2022 World Cup (291). The majority of these have related to incidents in licensed premises (162), with domestic incidents also making up a large proportion (109). A total of 88 people have been arrested so far, which is again up on Euro 2024 (66) and the 2022 World Cup (56).

Overview of Domestic Incidents and Arrests (Group Stage Comparison)

	World Cup 2018	Euro 2020 (incl. Wales)	World Cup 2022 (inc. Wales)	Euro 2024	World Cup 2026
Total incidents	441	467	291	304	463
Total arrests	86	130	56	66	88

Meanwhile, 1,958 individuals subject to Football Banning Orders were required to surrender their passports (the remainder didn't have a passport or were granted an exemption). Currently 97% of individuals have complied and work to locate and prosecute the outstanding 71 is ongoing.

Forces across England continue to have significant operations in place to deal with the extra demand caused by the World Cup and the increased activity around licensed premises and domestic abuse. We know that incidents increase in the knockout phase, generally fuelled by alcohol and with the Government's first blanket exemption to licensing hours in force for the England game on Wednesday, (when pubs can all stay open until 1am for the 5pm kick off) additional officers will be on duty to keep the public safe.

Chief Constable Mark Roberts, head of UK Football Policing, said: *"The behaviour of England fans – and of course the Scots- has been excellent throughout the group stages of the World Cup. In our pre-briefs we stressed to local law enforcement the positive record of our fans at recent World Cups, and it is great to see that continuing and the fans being policed according to their behaviour, not an outdated reputation. While the picture abroad has been predictably positive, sadly it's predictably challenging domestically, as the figures show. To keep it in context we have not seen large scale disorder, but given the team has successfully negotiated the group stage it is disappointing that we have seen increased incidents associated to alcohol consumption and domestic abuse. I would urge anyone who suffers domestic abuse to contact the police who will support you."*

Prolific Northwich offender jailed -Updated News Post

A prolific offender from Northwich has been jailed again following an investigation by local officers.

Gary Bloor appeared at Chester Crown Court on Monday 29 June where he was sentenced to three years and six months in prison. The 43-year-old of Parkfield Road, Northwich, had earlier pleaded guilty to 15 counts of shoplifting, 16 counts of breaching a criminal behaviour order, burglary, failing to stop for officers, dangerous driving, driving without a licence and driving without insurance.



Bloor is well known to local officers having committed a string of previous offences across the local area. Following multiple convictions, Bloor was handed a Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO) in 2023, which prohibited him from entering any retail premises in the CW8 and CW9 areas of Northwich without notifying staff of his presence and seeking their permission to shop at the premises.

His latest offending spree began on 17 July 2025 when he entered a pharmacy in Rudheath without permission and stole approximately £100 from the till. Bloor was quickly arrested before being released on bail. Then, in the early hours of Monday 22 September Bloor was spotted driving a Mercedes dangerously on the A556 in Rudheath, without a licence or insurance. He failed to stop for officers but was later confirmed as the driver and owner of the car.

Finally, between Wednesday 7 March 2026 and Sunday 10 May 2026, Bloor committed at least 15 separate shoplifting offences across Northwich. On each occasion he entered the stores without notifying staff and went on to steal thousands of pounds worth of stock. In total Bloor stole approximately £2,150 worth of stock from Boots, B&M, Iceland, Co-op Lostock Gralam and Spar in

Davenham. These included high value fragrances, electric toothbrushes, razors, steaks, chocolate and even bottles of Fairy Liquid.

Following the sentencing Police Constable Jack Kirkbride, of Northwich Local policing Unit, said: *"Bloor is a prolific offender who has absolutely no regard for the law and has shown no remorse for his actions. Despite several previous convictions, and multiple prison sentences, he never seems to learn his lesson. Therefore, until he does, we will have no option but to keep arresting him and putting him before the courts."*

Inspector Paul Healey said: *"Shoplifting is not a victimless crime, and we are committed to doing all we can to protect our local businesses. I hope that the sentence handed to Bloor will provide some reassurance to the community and act as a warning to anyone else planning to shoplift in Cheshire."*

Cheshire businesses warned: don't pay the ransom as cyber-attacks rise

Businesses across Cheshire are being urged to strengthen their cyber security and report attacks, as part of a national campaign highlighting the growing threat of ransomware.

New figures from Report Fraud reveal that 323 organisations across the UK reported a ransomware attack between April 2025 and March 2026 - the equivalent of more than 26 attacks every month. More than half of these reports came from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Financial losses of around £270,000 were reported - a 50% increase compared to the previous year. However, these figures are likely to be significantly higher due to underreporting.

The campaign, launching on 29 June 2026, urges organisations to protect themselves against ransomware and highlights the importance of reporting attacks. Cheshire Police is supporting the campaign and encouraging local organisations - particularly SMEs - to remain vigilant and take simple steps to protect themselves. A ransomware attack happens when cyber criminals, who are part of an organised crime group, find a vulnerability in a company's network to gain access, then establish control and plant malware into the company's encryption software. The malware planted is designed to prevent a person or business from accessing a device and the data stored on it. Once the malware is activated, it locks devices and access to data across the company's network and the cyber criminals behind the attack will then demand a ransom via an onscreen notification in exchange to decrypt the files or data held. The cyber criminals will often use an untraceable payment method, likely using a cryptocurrency.

Sergeant James Elliott, from Cheshire Constabulary's Economic Crime Unit, said: *"Ransomware attacks continue to pose a serious risk to businesses across Cheshire, particularly smaller organisations who may not have the same level of cyber protection in place. Simple steps such as regularly backing up data, keeping systems up to date, and ensuring staff are trained to recognise suspicious emails can make a real difference. Prevention is key. We would also strongly urge any business that becomes a victim of ransomware to report it immediately. Reporting helps build a clearer intelligence picture and enables us to support other organisations in preventing similar incidents."*

Chief Superintendent Amanda Wolf, Head of Report Fraud Operations, said: *“Ransomware remains a serious and evolving threat to organisations of all sizes across the UK. The most effective defence is preparation. We encourage businesses to be proactive - through regular data backups, strong access controls, keeping systems up to date, and following National Cyber Security Centre guidance. These can all significantly reduce the risk and impact of an attack. If a business is experiencing a ransomware attack, it should be reported immediately by calling Report Fraud on 0300 123 2040, where a dedicated team is available to provide support and guidance during an incident.”*

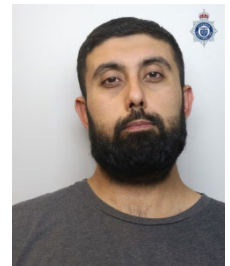
What to do if you're under a ransomware attack

- If you are a small or medium sized enterprise currently experiencing a ransomware attack, you should report it immediately by calling Report Fraud on 0300 123 2040. Report Fraud has a 24/7 phone line dedicated for businesses, charities or organisations who are under a cyber-attack.
- Do not pay the ransom. The National Cyber Security Centre and UK law enforcement do not encourage, endorse or condone the payment of ransom demands. There is no guarantee that access can be regained to data held and devices could still be infected. Take the right steps to ensure your organisation is protected against ransomware by [looking at the advice and guidance web pages from the National Cyber Security Centre](#).

Man jailed for stalking his ex-girlfriend with fake Tinder profile

A man who faked his ex-girlfriend's Tinder profile to entice multiple men to her address to rape her has been jailed.

Asad Hussain, also known as Ash Hussain, from Hankinson Avenue, Heald Green, Cheadle, appeared at Chester Crown Court on Monday 29 June and was sentenced to eight years in prison. He was also handed a 15 year restraining order. He was found guilty of Stalking involving Serious Alarm or Distress, Assault by Beating, and Failure to Comply with a Section 49 RIPA Notice at an earlier hearing.



The court heard that in April 2024, the victim went on several dates with the 36-year-old after he contacted her on social media, operating under the alias 'Mick Renney'. As the relationship developed, Hussain became increasingly controlling resulting in him going to her house because she had a male friend round and repeatedly ring her doorbell for two hours, only leaving after a neighbour called the police.

The relationship came to an end when on Monday 6 May 2024, the woman awoke to find Hussain had taken her mobile phone and read through her messages to male colleagues and friends. Hussain then bombarded the victim with questions, demanding to know if she was seeing other men. He later gave the phone back to her, but when she tried to go to the bathroom. Hussain objected, saying she couldn't have her phone without him being present. She tried to go anyway, but Hussain forced his way in and pushed her causing her to fall and he took her phone. This was the last time she ever saw the man calling himself 'Mick Renney' and she would remain unaware of his real identity.

Hussain subsequently contacted her daughter and friends, accusing her of cheating on him, before making numerous attempts to rekindle their relationship which she refused. Then in late-July 2024,

multiple men began attending her home address saying they'd matched with her on the dating app Tinder and she had invited them round. On one night in August 2024, four men attended her address one after another, all reporting having received almost identical messages.

Other men who turned up at her home told her that her messages said she wanted to engage in a 'rape fantasy' and that she wanted to be 'roughed up'. They'd also explained they were led to believe that if she said 'no' it meant she 'wanted it more'. Then in September 2024 she went to answer her door after the doorbell rang. As she approached, a man shoved the door causing a glass panel to smash. When she explained her situation, he showed her messages from the fake Tinder account telling him that the front door was open for him and that he should give the door a 'shove' as it was 'stiff'. Later that day, she had gone to work when another man attended and managed to enter her house while her teenage daughter was upstairs alone. He remained inside the address for several minutes before leaving, without incident.

Following these incidents, many of the men provided her with their details because they wanted to help with any police investigation. In their statements to police all of them described incredibly similar events where upon matching with who they believed to be her on Tinder, they were quickly invited round to her address and given her phone number. When they arrived, they were asked questions regarding what cars were parked outside. They were then told that she was waiting in her conservatory for them and instructed to enter her address. At least 18 men are believed to have been deceived into attending her address. The true number however remains unknown.

When the victim contacted police response officers from Northwich Local Policing Unit began an investigation but couldn't identify a 'Mick Renney' on any systems. When they reviewed the victim's video doorbell, they quickly identified that the car 'Renney' drove was registered to Asad Hussain and insured to his business. They were now able to check other systems and established that the 'Mick Renney' in the doorbell footage was in fact Asad Hussain. The case was then passed to the Harm Reduction Unit, Cheshire Police's specialist Stalking investigation and risk management team.

It was soon found that Hussain had made significant efforts to conceal his real identity and avoid detection. Hussain changed the registration of his car and used completely separate dedicated mobile phones for his 'Mick Renney' alter-ego and the fake Tinder account. Having learnt of police interest in him, Hussain discarded these mobile phones, and factory reset his personal devices. Hussain even went as far to attempt to have his details removed from the Companies House listing for his business.

Hussain was arrested on 6 October 2024 after officers from Cumbria Police sighted his van on the M6. In interview Hussain denied being 'Mick Renney' and repeatedly denied knowing the victim or having ever been to her address. He denied any knowledge of the fake Tinder accounts, or using any form of social media or dating app. He claimed that his car in the victim's video doorbell footage, a V10-engined Audi R8 sportscar, was part of a classic car rental service his plumbing and gas business was trialling. However, he was unable to suggest anyone who had leased it and when challenged said his business didn't retain records of lease agreements.

Hussain said that on 6 May 2024, when he'd assaulted the victim, he'd been working at a supermarket but refused to give any details of where this was or name anyone who could corroborate his account. Officers were able to disprove Hussain's account using a wide range of

evidence including CCTV, ANPR and telecommunications data, discovering Hussain had created multiple fake Tinder accounts pretending to be the victim. Officers were able to show that every time the Tinder accounts were active, Hussain had travelled from Cheadle to the Northwich area, staying at an industrial unit he rented or parked in a layby on the A556 two miles from the victim's home while operating the fake Tinder accounts for hours at a time.

Hussain even went as far as contacting the woman pretending to be a man who'd matched with one of the fake Tinder accounts he'd created. In messages sent to her, he claimed to have attended her home address more than once and quizzed her on whether police had identified him and what officers had told her.

In March 2025, Hussain was charged with stalking involving serious alarm or distress and assault by beating. Following charge Hussain continued to deny any involvement in the offences or having ever met the victim. Following his arrest, two devices – a mobile phone and an iPad – were seized from his van. Hussain told officers that neither would hold any data relating to the victim or the offences, but repeatedly refused to provide any passcodes for them, preventing officers' access.

In June 2025, officers obtained a notice under Section 49 Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, legally requiring Hussain to disclose passcodes for these devices. Failure to comply with such a notice is a criminal offence punishable by up to two years in prison, or 5 years in cases involving child abuse or terrorism. After being served with the S.49 RIPA notice, Hussain provided his mobile phone password but said the iPad belonged to a client, but he didn't know who he was and that he'd been transporting this to Scotland on behalf of a colleague when he was arrested didn't know the passcode. Enquiries however quickly established that he was lying, and the device was linked to his personal phone number and business email address. He had even been connected to the internet at a family member's address on the morning of his arrest.

Hussain was therefore further charged in September 2025 with failing to comply with a Section 49 notice to disclose the key to protected information contrary to Section 53 Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000. (RIPA). Despite the overwhelming evidence against him, Hussain continued to deny the offences.

Following the sentencing, investigating officer PC Keith Terrill from the Constabulary's Hidden Harm Reduction Unit, said: *"I welcome the sentence handed by the courts in this case. Asad Hussain is an exceptionally controlling and deceitful individual who went to extreme lengths to cause fear and distress to the victim and her children. At no point has he taken any responsibility for his actions. Hussain instead chose to repeatedly lie and hinder the investigation, before forcing the victim and witnesses to sit through a 9-day Crown Court trial. The impact on the victim and her family has been devastating. I hope that today's sentence brings them some closure and allows them to begin rebuilding their lives."*

This has been one of the most technically complex and disturbing stalking cases Cheshire Constabulary has ever investigated. It has however once again shown that the internet offers no sanctuary to those who wish to commit violence against women and girls and domestic abuse. Cheshire Constabulary takes all reports of stalking extremely seriously and is committed to using every capability and power available to protect the public from the risks stalkers pose. For anyone who believes they're the victim of stalking, my plea is please contact us; we will listen, and we will act."

The victim said in her statement: *"I am grateful for the sentence that the Judge has imposed on Mr Hussain today, this will bring me some peace over the coming months. However, no sentence takes away the enormous impact his behaviour has had on both myself and my daughters. No person has the right to make me feel unsafe in my own home just because I no longer want to date them. No should mean no. Now I am left wondering how many men have my address and believe I want to be sexually assaulted, or worse. I appreciate today has delivered some closure and the criminal justice process is at an end however, Mr Hussain has never shown any remorse, never accepted responsibility and I know I will never understand why or receive an apology. That alone has been difficult to accept.*

"Without the help of Cheshire Police's harm reduction unit, especially PC Terrill the investigating officer and Vicky my advocate I do not know whether I would be here today. PC Terrill's determination, expertise and hard work have ensured that myself and my daughters are safe and a dangerous man is behind bars. That coupled with my advocates unwavering support and advice gave me the courage to give evidence at the trial and to understand that my recovery is just as important as the outcome today. I would also like to thank the CPS, the Jury and the Judge for taking this case so seriously and treating me with respect. Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family, especially Kathryn and Dan. I will always be thankful for their endless support."

<https://youtu.be/9VcvdSli6Bs>

Commercial Vehicle Unit celebrates one year of operations in Cheshire

The Constabulary's Commercial Vehicle Unit, which ensures heavy and large goods vehicles are travelling and operating safely within our county, has recently celebrated its first year of operations since returning to Cheshire in 2025.



Our specialist Commercial Vehicle Unit (CVU) is dedicated to ensuring the safety and compliance of commercial vehicle traffic across Cheshire, which is home to some of the UK's busiest motorway networks. The CVU plays a pivotal role in enforcing regulations, improving road safety, and tackling issues related to commercial vehicles, including freight crime and immigration crime. The team works closely with several community partners, including the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), National Highways, Immigration Enforcement, DVLA, NaVCIS, and other regional CVUs.

The CVU has several important responsibilities across Cheshire and the North West, including offering specialist advice as qualified Transport Managers and Dangerous Goods Safety Advisors (DGSA), ensuring compliance across a wide range of legislation. The unit carries out checks on overweight vehicles, tachographs and driving hours, insecure loads, and vehicle conditions, alongside dealing with traffic offences such as drink and drug driving, mobile phone use, and

inconsiderate driving. They also ensure compliance with ADR (the Carriage of Dangerous Goods), reporting non-compliance and working with the Health & Safety Executive.

As part of the Department for Transport's Road Safety Strategy, Cheshire's CVU officers also deliver "Toolbox Talks", sessions held at HGV and LGV depots with transport managers and drivers, giving them the opportunity to speak to police in a familiar setting. These sessions also allow officers to integrate into the haulage industry, building working relationships and explaining their role within the force, not only in terms of enforcement but also what operators can expect from a police response to incidents such as HGV collisions. During a recent session, a driver with 36 years of experience told officers he had never previously had the opportunity to speak with police in this kind of environment and highlighted the positive impact it had.

Our CVU has been present within Cheshire for longer than many realise, initially launching in Cheshire in 2010 as part of the Constabulary's Motorway Unit. Since then, its work has become integrated within several Cheshire-based and regional organisations, including collaboration with the Regional Commercial Vehicle Unit covering Greater Manchester, Merseyside, and Lancashire, as well as supporting the DVSA and HMRC from 2018. As of April 2025, the unit returned fully to Cheshire, now falling under the Roads and Crime Unit, and now consists of PCs Aiden Sharrock and Ken Richardson, and Sergeant Dave Harrison. Since then, the team has undertaken a number of joint operations alongside established partners:

- DVSA: Forming and building upon an already excellent working relationship, the two organisations often work side by side, offering the expertise and unique powers of both to maximise efficiency in the ultimate goal of road safety. Operations have recently expanded to new sites in Lymm, Burtonwood, Hapsford, and Hooton, and into Merseyside.
- National Highways: Conducting joint activity such as Operation Tramline, targeting the Fatal Five offences (careless driving, speeding, drink and drug driving, mobile phone use, and not wearing a seatbelt) and uninsured vehicles.
- Immigration and Border Force: Working together to identify the exploitation of foreign HGV drivers operating on low-cost contracts and exhibiting unsafe practices.

The unit has also run tachograph, driver hours, and dangerous goods training courses, meaning that all specialist training is now delivered in-force by our own officers. Most recently, in February, the unit supported the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Commercial Vehicle Intensification Period, aimed at improving road safety by targeting non-compliant HGVs and other commercial vehicles. During the two-week period, officers stopped 122 commercial vehicles across Cheshire. Working with partners, they issued 117 traffic offence reports, imposed 48 immediate prohibitions preventing vehicles from being driven, and arrested two drivers for drink or drug driving offences.

Last month, the team also took part in the national Operation Chemical deployment, positioning themselves on motorways and key routes across Cheshire. CVU officers stopped numerous vehicles from across the world during the campaign and identified that approximately 75% of those vehicles checked were in breach of safety regulations.

PC Aidy Sharrock, of the Constabulary's Commercial Vehicle Unit, said: *"Despite having only formally returned to Cheshire last year as part of the Constabulary's Roads and Crime Unit, the Commercial Vehicle Unit draws upon the many years of experience and wealth of knowledge provided by our dedicated team of officers, who ensure our roads are kept safe every single day."*

Cheshire is home to several busy motorways that connect us to major cities like Manchester and Liverpool. This also means that a great number of motorists are regularly carrying loads and cargo of all kinds in our county. It is for exactly this reason that the Commercial Vehicle Unit regularly deploys onto Cheshire's road network alongside our community partner groups to ensure those carrying heavy, long, and often dangerous goods are doing so safely and legally- taking action against those who do not."

PC Ken Richardson, also of the Commercial Vehicle Unit, added: *"Since the unit's return to full-time operations in Cheshire, we have developed our relationships with community partners such as the DVSA, which has in turn led to an expansion of our operations, with our officers now patrolling more road networks in the North West than ever before. Commercial vehicles carry a significant risk when not used in the way they were designed. Insecure loads, overloaded HGVs, dangerous goods and chemicals, driving without sufficient breaks, and those who commit criminal activity all present increased risks, and sadly we have seen the devastating effects these actions can have."*

"Not only do we focus on the road safety aspect, we also recognise that the haulage industry is a unique community that is subject to unique issues and is very often the victim of unique crimes. We aspire to be the community officers of that industry within Cheshire and will look to help them wherever and whenever we can. We are committed to keeping the roads in Cheshire as safe as possible for all road users, not just during enforcement weeks, but every day."

Latest Cheshire Appeals

CCTV image released following incident in Warrington

Officers investigating reports of an incident at a store in Warrington have released a CCTV image of a man they would like to speak to.

At around 2.20pm on Sunday 17 May, police were called to B&Q on Delph Lane, Warrington, following reports that a man had tried to kiss a member of staff on the neck. When confronted, the man became irate and began verbally abusing other staff members.



Enquiries have been ongoing since the incident was reported in an attempt to identify the person responsible. Now officers have released an image of a man they would like to speak to as they believe he may have vital information.

Police Constable Lewis Payne said: *"As part of our ongoing investigation, we are now urging anyone who recognises the man pictured in the CCTV images to get in touch with us. We would also like to appeal directly to the man in the images to make contact with us. You can report information to Cheshire Police via www.cheshire.police.uk/tell-us or call 101, quoting IML- 2330522."*

Appeal to trace wanted man from Liverpool

Officers are appealing for information to trace a wanted man from Liverpool.

Anton Kost is wanted by police for failing to appear at court. The 44-year-old is known to frequent the Castlefields area of Runcorn and the wider Halton area. Anyone who sees Kost or has information regarding his whereabouts is asked to report it [via the website](#), quoting 26000511639 or call Cheshire Constabulary on 101. Alternatively, information can be reported anonymously, via Crimestoppers, on 0800 555 111.



Cheshire Neighbourhood Watch Association (CNWA)

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

Email: cheshirenw@outlook.com

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

Facebook page: facebook.com/cheshirenwa



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