

West Midlands Police sign up to Code of Practice to stop sale of stolen goods

WEST Midlands Police are one of the first forces in the country to fully embrace a new code of practice aimed at slamming the door in the face of thieves trying to sell stolen goods.

A Home Office Code of Practice encourages forces to get second hand stores signed up to a scheme where they check all items offered up for sale against the CheckMEND database which logs if goods have been recorded as lost or stolen.

The force have hundreds of stores such as Cash Converters, Cash Generator, Cex and other independent second hand stores signed up to the scheme and are launching it in style on 23 January with an Impact Activation Day.

On the day officers across the force will be at second hand stores, schools and shopping centres registering goods onto the immobilise database for free.

Each of the stores who have signed up check items offered for sale against the CheckMEND site. Each search generates a unique certificate number. This can be issued to a potential buyer to prove that at the time of purchase the item was not reported lost or stolen and no adverse information was recorded against it.

David Bursey from Byte size Solutions in Kings Heath, Birmingham said: "Now we can use CheckMEND we can buy items from people who come in off the street. We have been dubious about doing that in the past because we have not been able to trace the history of the item. This has opened up new possibilities in how we can conduct our business that is of real benefit to us and our customers."

DC Vanessa Lewis from Force CID who is heading up the project to get all West Midlands second hand stores signed up said: "Our officers have been passionate about getting stores signed up as one of the main ways we can stop the sale of stolen goods and ultimately deter burglars and thieves.

The more the public register their goods on immobilise, the more effective the system will be."

A YouTube video explaining how the system works is available on PC TV <http://youtu.be/LNx-5eoaXGA>

Details of where officers will be across the force area on 23 January are:

Birmingham East

Birmingham East Police will be at Swan retail centre Yardley, Kings Heath High Street and the Fox and Goose shopping centre, Washwood Heath 10am-6pm where they will be registering people's property on the immobilise database and handing out literature.

Birmingham East Police will also be visiting schools and youth clubs to encourage pupils to register their property, licensed premises to ask them to look out for stolen goods being sold on and leaflet drops.

Birmingham North

In the morning Birmingham North Officers will be checking for stolen property at various locations.

Officers will be registering people's property on the immobilise database from the mobile police station on the Parade, Sutton Town Centre, 10am-12pm, Erdington High Street 1-3pm,

They will be encouraging pupils to register their goods on immobilise at Arthur Terry High School, Four Oaks and Castle Vale Comprehensive in the morning and at youth groups in the evening

They will also be distributing leaflets and crime prevention advice in Mere Green, Stockland Green, Sutton College, Edward Champion School in Stockland Green, and Birmingham North Academy during the day and in late night shopping centres including Fort Retail Park, Erdington, Princess Alice Centre Kingstanding, Asda Walmley and Castle Vale retail park in the evening.

Birmingham South

Officers will be on the High Street in Harborne property marking and promoting immobilise. They will also be promoting immobilise at Four Dwelling School, Quinton and the QE Hospital.

Birmingham South Police will also be visiting all secondary schools over the next two weeks to promote property marking and register goods on immobilise.

Birmingham West and Central

Officers will be registering property on the immobilise database and distributing crime prevention literature at:

Tesco, Spring Hill, 10am-3pm
South City College, 10am-2pm
Handsworth Library, 2-4pm
Matthew Boulton College, 11am-3pm
The One Stop Shopping Centre, Perry Barr 11am-5pm
The Heights student accommodation, Aston 4-6pm
Bull Ring, Paradise Forum and Phones 4 U in New Street, 10am-3pm.

Solihull

Solihull Police will be at the Touchwood Shopping Centre between 10am and 4pm and Solihull North Sports Centre registering property on immobilise

Coventry

Coventry Police will be registering people's property on the immobilise database from the community van in the streets around North Earlsdon 9am-11am, the Alvis Retail Park, Holyhead Road 11am-12.30pm and the Arena Shopping Park, Longford 12.45-2.15pm. They will also be offering crime prevention literature.

Wolverhampton

Wolverhampton Police will be at St John's retail Park 10am-2.30pm, the Wulfrun Centre between 10am and 3pm, Sainsburys, Bentley Bridge 10am-3pm, Top Shops Ashmore Park, 10am-2pm, Ashmore Park Library and Wolverhampton University registering people's property on the immobilise database. Trading Standards will also be on hand for advice at the Wulfrun Centre.

Sandwell

Sandwell Police will be at second hand shops who have signed up to the code of practice to register customer's new property on the immobilise database and to check items offered up for sale are not reported lost or stolen. Officers will also be promoting the benefits of buying goods with a CheckMEND certificate.

Shops not yet signed up to the code of practice will be visited by officers who will talk through the benefits of joining the scheme.

Dudley

Officers from the Merry Hill team will visit electrical goods shops and provide them with literature to publicise registering goods on the immobilise database. Shops will be issued with a special immobilise stamp so they can stamp all receipts with details of how to register new goods on the database.

Between 11.30am and 6pm officers will have a stall in the shopping centre to help the public register property on immobilise and provide them with crime prevention literature.

Officers will also be promoting the immobilise database in Sedgely, Dudley, Stourbridge, Halesowen and Brierley Hill town centres.

Walsall

Officers from Walsall will be helping new phone owners to register their phones on immobilise at the O2 shop, Walsall Town centre 9am-4pm, Local schools and Morrisons in Aldridge and Bloxwich High Street. Trading standards will also be on hand to answer any queries.

In Willenhall officers will be registering property on immobilise in Willenhall Town Centre, Morrisons, Tesco, Darlaston Town Centre, Bentley Retail Park and at local schools