



THE BRITISH
CHAMBERS OF
COMMERCE



1.1. Experience of crime and reporting it

Over half of all businesses experience crime yet almost three in ten do not report it.

- 58% of businesses have experienced at least one incidence of crime in the last 12 months. Most commonly businesses have suffered damage to vehicles, vandalism and graffiti and burglary.
- Overall, 15% have experienced just one instance of crime in the last 12 months, 28% between two and five incidents, 7% between six and ten incidents and 5% eleven or more. The number of crimes range from 0 to 1000; the mean is 4.6.
- Of those that have experienced crimes in the last 12 months, 28% chose not to report the incidents to the police. 21% reported up to half and 14% reported most of them. 37% reported every incident.
- The majority of businesses, 68%, suggest that they might not report a crime if there were no or only a relatively small loss or damage to their premises or property. 36% claim they might not report it because of a lack of confidence in any police response and 29% feel the time taken to report such an instance could be too time consuming. 20% suggest they might not report a crime if it were just an attempt, whilst 18% would be concerned about increases in their insurance costs.

1.2. Computer related crime and e-crime

e-crime is prevalent and should be tackled by a central or national body.

- 94% of businesses have suffered from spam e-mail during the past 12 months. Coupled with this, 31% claim to have been the victim of phishing attempts, 23% have been infected by spyware, 19% have experienced equipment failure or data loss following virus infection, 11% credit card fraud and 8% theft of laptop or desktop computers.
- 81% of businesses use anti-virus software to help combat computer related incidents and 77% use SPAM filtering software. 74% routinely back-up their business data; 70% store their data off-site. 63% have installed a software based firewall and 51% a hardware firewall. 40% have developed a strong password policy and 21% have compiled an asset inventory.
- 74% feel there should be a central or national body set up to deal with the issue of e-crime.

1.3. The cost and impact of crime

The annual cost to UK business of crime is £12.6 bn.

- 73% believe that business crime results in real costs to their business. While 16% suggest this cost is under £1k, 28% indicate that it is between £1k and £5k and 29% say it is higher. On average, the estimated annual cost to business is £12,200.

- 69% claim business crime has impacted upon their business. 58% claim it has wasted staff time, 32% that it has disrupted trading, 23% that it has affected staff morale and 18% that it has raised insurance costs. 13% feel they have lost business as a result of business crime, 11% believe their company image has been damaged and 9% have had to make changes to their building layout and design.
- 73% of businesses feel that crime levels in an area have a negative effect on business location decisions. 62% also believe an area's crime levels can hamper inward investment whilst 57% suggest they can impact decisions on expansion. 49% feel crime levels have a negative effect on recruitment.

1.4. Local crime and awareness of partnerships to tackle it

Business crime should be a Key Performance Indicator.

- 81% of businesses feel that crime against business is a problem in their local area.
- Just 27% are aware of a Community Safety or Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership operating in their area. Of these, just 38% feel they are effective. 19% feel they are ineffective and 43% are unable to express an opinion either way.
- 59% feel that the business community should be given a greater role in local crime partnerships. 9% disagree and 32% could not comment.
- 56% of businesses have sought advice on crime reduction. Of the various agencies and organisations able to give this advice, 23% indicate that the police are the most helpful. This is followed by security companies, insurance companies and Chambers of Commerce.
- 92% feel that a fast police response is an effective way of reducing crime against their business. 91% claim the same for visible policing and computer security devices and software, 86% for video camera surveillance and 79% for tougher sentencing and better staff training. 78% say the same is true for security grant assistance, 75% for private security patrols, 72% for crime prevention advice and 67% for business watch/shop watch schemes.
- 32% of businesses are aware of PCSO's patrolling their local business area. Of these, 49% know their local PCSO's by name or by sight and 43% feel that they have had an impact on the perceptions of safety in their area, though 24% disagree and 33% could not comment.
- 44% feel confident that the police understand the issues that are most important to their business, though just 32% are confident that the police are dealing with these.
- 88% feel that local police forces should support businesses through the use of dedicated Police Business Crime Advisors and 85% feel that business crime should become a Key Performance Indicator.