

Issue 7

April 2017

LONDON

Community Watch magazine



This issue of LCW magazine has been sponsored by Checkatrade.com Where reputation matters

**The last photo taken of hero
PC Keith Palmer before he
was cruelly knifed to death
- Full story P7**



PC Keith Palmer and the last photo taken of him by American tourist Staci Martin who only heard he had been knifed to death 45 minutes after she got him to pose for this shot - Full story inside

Checkatrade.com

Where reputation matters

How do you choose a reliable tradesperson?



When you need work doing around your home, finding reputable trades is difficult. Can you really trust them? Since 1998 Checkatrade has been a FREE service giving you the background information you need to make a confident decision when inviting trades into your home.

Our trades and services have been vetted to high standards. In fact 20 checks are carried out including ID, references, insurance, qualifications and professional memberships. Then we monitor their work on an on-going basis by collecting feedback directly from you, their customers.



Joining Checkatrade has allowed us to reach new customers, as our work is monitored by the people who really matter... our customers. It provides new customers with the ability to choose a trade with honest reviews and also the peace of mind that every year we have to meet the strict criteria set by Checkatrade."

Sunrise Plumbing & Heating



So when you're thinking about choosing your next tradesperson, take the guess work out of your decision and don't be the victim of a rogue trade.



Just three examples of how fly-tippers are blighting parts of our countryside

Waste hits your pocket

Not only does fly-tipping create an eyesore, it is also a serious health risk creating pollution and attracting rats and other vermin.

By Peter Faulkner

LOCAL authorities picked up a bill for £50million over the last year as the cost of clearing up fly-tipping increased yet again.

Councils had to deal with 936,000 incidents as the fly-tipping epidemic increased by more than a quarter over the last two years, reversing a steady decline that had been seen for five years previously.

The number of incidents last year rose by 5.6 per cent compared with 2013-14, while the clear-up costs rose by 11 per cent.

Two-thirds of the rubbish that was fly-tipped was household waste, the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs said.

Almost half of the fly-tipped waste was dumped by the roadside, while 28 per cent was on footpaths, bridleways and in back alleys.

As well as clear-up costs, local councils spent £17.6 million on investigating the incidents, issuing more than 75,000 warning letters and prosecuting those responsible.

Yet the number of prosecutions fell by almost 10 per cent to 1,810 last year. Almost 1,500 of these resulted in a fine while 21 cases resulted in prison sentences.

Ministers have said they will introduce on-the-spot fines for fly-tipping from spring 2016, following calls from the Local Government Association.

Local Government Association spokesperson

Cllr Judith Blake said: "At a time when social care faces a funding gap of at least £2.6 billion by 2020 and councils' overall funding shortfall is predicted to reach £5.8 billion within three years, local authorities are having to spend a vast amount each year on tackling litter and fly-tipping.

"This is money that would be better spent on vital front line services. Litter and fly-tipping is environmental vandalism – it's unpleasant, unnecessary and unacceptable.

"The Government has responded to our call for councils to be able to apply Fixed Penalty Notices for small scale fly-tipping – and this is a big step in the right direction.

"We need a new streamlined system which helps councils - one that is nimble, flexible and effective.

"Not only does fly-tipping create an eyesore for residents, it is also a serious public health risk, creating pollution and attracting rats and other vermin.

"There are a number of additional changes that would help tackle littering and fly-tipping, including sharing more of the responsibility with product producers.

"This includes manufacturers providing more take-back services so people can hand in old furniture and mattresses when they buy new ones."

Laser pen attack

A MAN who deliberately shone a laser pen at a National Police Air Service helicopter causing a crew member to lose their vision has been jailed at Harrow Crown Court.

Limshin Chung Ching Wan, 42, of Blackdown Close, Finchley, pleaded guilty to recklessly and negligently acting in a manner likely to endanger an aircraft when he appeared at Hendon Magistrates' Court.

He appeared at Harrow Crown Court where he was sentenced to six months imprisonment suspended for two years. He must observe a curfew and was ordered to pay court costs of £300.00.

Police were called to an address in Blackdown Close, East Finchley on January 12, 2017, after a National Police Air Service Helicopter was targeted with a green laser light several times, causing a crew member to momentarily lose vision.

The aircraft was repositioned to protect the pilot and local officers from Barnet's Response Team swiftly attended the address where it was believed the laser pen was being

ATM scam alert

TINY pin-prick holes on cash machines are the latest way fraudsters are trying to cheat unsuspecting Londoners out of their bank details.

Mini cameras have been discovered by police in four cash machines in the City.

The recording device is hidden inside a false cover to the cash dispensing slot, with the aim to record the victim putting in their pin number.

Two were found at a cashpoint in St Paul's Churchyard within weeks of each other, another device was removed by a member of the public in nearby Smithfield Street, and a camera was found on a cashpoint in Fetter Lane by a member of the public who removed it to get their card back from the machine.

Police are now warning people to be wary when getting cash out and to always cover the keypad as they enter their details and also to check cash machines for any loose parts, including the card slot and keypad.

If you spot a suspicious device when using a cash point, report it to the bank concerned immediately, and notify police. If you think a crime is in progress when you discover the device, call 999.

Home and away

Solicitor evaded tax

A SOLICITOR who lied about his income to steal more than £60,000 from HM Revenue & Customs has been jailed for 18 months.

Criminal defence specialist Azhar Islam Khan, 45, from North London, failed to declare the shareholder dividend income from his business and rental income he received from two properties in Blackburn and Preston.

An investigation by HMRC revealed that Khan withdrew money from his law firm, Wembley-based City Law Solicitors, but lied in his accounts, recording the transactions as 'professional fees'.

Investigators also discovered that Khan paid for a new kitchen and bathroom for his home from the company bank account. This was recorded as 'business expenses'.

Khan, who chose not to give any evidence at his four-week trial, was found guilty of income tax evasion and as well as an 18 month sentence, he was also suspended from being a company director for four years.

A fake takeaway

A MAN has been jailed after a Chinese takeaway was used as cover for a counterfeit cigarette operation.

David Hutchinson, 58, of Peterlee's Eden Lane pleaded guilty to three charges of possessing counterfeit cigarettes and was jailed at Durham Crown Court for 13 months. half to be spent in custody and the other half on licence. He was also ordered to pay a £100 victim surcharge for each count.

More than 86,000 cigarettes worth more than £17,000, £8,300 in cash and a small amount of rolling tobacco were seized in June 2015 during raids on properties associated with Hutchinson and Amanda Wen Hua Liu.

The raids followed an operation by Durham County Council officers, during which Liu supplied 133 packets of counterfeit cigarettes worth around £500 to an undercover Trading Standards officer.

The authority began investigating Hutchinson after receiving information that he was involved in supplying illicit cigarettes to 'tab houses' in the East Durham area using The New Century Chinese takeaway in Peterlee's Fulwell Road as a cover.

Rogue trader took £80k

A ROGUE trader has been jailed after conning elderly victims out of more than £80,000 through unnecessary building works.

Working under the guise of Admiral Property Developments Ltd, 32-year-old Patrick Doherty, aka Patrick Ward, identified his victims after cold calling them.

Between April and August 2015, Doherty visited an 86-year-old woman in Rickmansworth on several occasions, suggesting that various works needed to be carried out, including improvements to her roof.

In total, the victim handed over in excess of £32,200 for very little work, which was completed to a very low standard.

He was sentenced at Harrow Crown Court after pleading guilty to three counts of fraud by false representation. He was handed a three year sentence for each count, all to run concurrently.

No sentence reduction

A WATFORD man jailed for his part in a sophisticated immigration scam, has been told by top judges he cannot complain about his sentence.

Zahid Hafeez, 46, of Kings Close, Watford, was locked up after a plot linked to English language tests for foreign students was uncovered.

Hundreds of non-EU citizens were said to have got student visas after fake 'sitters' took the tests on their behalf.

The practice was exposed following an undercover investigation by journalists, which was later aired on the BBC's Panorama programme.

Hafeez was jailed for five years at Harrow Crown Court in May last year after being found guilty of immigration offences.

Last month he challenged his sentence at the Court of Appeal in London but, dismissing his appeal, Mrs Justice Nicola Davies said the judge who sentenced him had heard "overwhelming" evidence against him.

All that glitters...

POLICE in Cambridgeshire have issued a warning about 'roadside jewellery scammers' following some incidents in Huntingdonshire recently.

In these incidents, a man standing besides a car stopped on the side of the road flags down a passing motorist and asks for money, explaining that he has run out of fuel or broken down for some other reason.

The motorist is offered an item of jewellery in exchange for cash, but this is often just cheap metal and of no value.

The man, and passengers in the car, may be of middle-eastern origin, speaking in broken English. In at least one of these incidents, when money was refused, the man got back in his car and drove off.

If this has happened to you, please report it to the police using the 101 non-emergency number. You can also contact Action Fraud, the UK centre for fraud and cyber crime, on 0300 123 2040.

China cracking down

LAST YEAR 19,000 people were arrested in China for committing telecom frauds, officials have claimed.

The Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP) increased efforts to crack down on telecom and Internet frauds and supervised the handling of 62 major fraud cases last year, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Chinese police arrested 19,345 suspects for telecom frauds last year, according to the SPP.

One case reportedly led to the death of Xu Yuyu, an 18-year-old high school graduate from Linyi City in east China's Shandong Province. Xu was reported to have lost USD 1,400 meant for university tuition fees to fraudsters, the SPP said.

The Ministry of Public Security (MPS) destroyed a transnational telecom fraud gang in Cambodia, catching 39 suspects and paying compensation of more than 360,000 yuan (USD 52000) to 21 victims.

Cruel jewellery thief

POLICE are appealing for information after a fraudster tricked his way into an elderly man home in Dunstable and stole his late wife's jewellery.

The man knocked at the door of his home in Lockington Crescent and said that he was a tree surgeon who needed to cut down a tree in the garden.

The victim paid the man £100, but a short while later he realised the man had gone upstairs and taken the jewellery and a large sum of money.

"We are keen to trace the heartless individuals who tricked the elderly victim, and to recover the victim's late wife's jewellery which obviously holds great sentimental value," said Detective Constable Colin Knight.

"I would also urge anyone who knows who is responsible, or anyone who has been offered any jewellery for sale, to get in touch with us."

Need a
tradesperson?



Check them out at
Checkatrade.com

Checkatrade.com
Where reputation matters



The Metropolitan Police seized a record £73m from criminal activity

Crime doesn't pay

Criminal Finance Teams and joint enforcement teams ensure that criminals don't profit from their activities by seizing assets

By Peter Faulkner

CRIMINALS are discovering that crime really does not pay as the Metropolitan Police Service announced it has seized more than £73 million from convicted perpetrators during 2015/16.

This is the largest total seized in London in a single year since the Proceeds of Crime Act came into force in 2002.

Each year millions of pounds of assets are recovered from convicted criminals following financial investigations by the MPS' Criminal Finance Teams, using proceeds of crime legislation.

Criminal Finance Teams and joint enforcement teams are ensuring that criminals do not profit from their criminality by using the full range of the legislation to restrain assets and confiscate the value of their criminal activity. Assets range from properties to vehicles, jewellery and art-work.

In the financial year 2015/16, the MPS issued orders under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 totalling £73.4million.

The largest single value cash seizure in 2015/16 was £943,000. The cash was found when officers stopped a black cab in east London and found a large holdall in the passenger compartment which contained the cash. The cash was subsequently forfeited under the Proceeds of Crime Act in early 2016.

The largest confiscation order made in May 2015 was to the value of £6,328,119.39. The criminality related to the supply of chip and pin machines to central London brothels.

The main perpetrator created a number of sham companies purporting to offer events and function facilities to corporate clients.

These companies were then used to obtain numerous chip and pin machines from various Merchant Services Providers by fraudulently misrepresenting their business intentions.

The machines were then placed into several brothels in order to facilitate the payment for vice services and Class A drugs from paying customers.

Funds forfeited and confiscated by the MPS are paid to the Home Office, although the MPS receives a percentage back from the Home Office through the Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme (ARIS.) In 2015/16, the MPS received £8.89million through ARIS.

The MPS uses monies received from the ARIS income to:

- Fund and support financial investigation posts within the MPS Business Groups;
- Fund and support financial investigation training across the MPS;
- Operate and fund a number of different internal schemes to drive performance including the POCA Funding Scheme, used to support and encourage Borough proactive policing in targeting organised criminal groups, gangs and violence.

During Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe's term as Commissioner since September 2011, the MPS has seized or confiscated £317.14million through the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and has received £40.16million through ARIS.

The retiring Commissioner said: "It's satisfying to see criminals pay back for the damage they cause communities through the assets we've recovered. The message is loud and clear, crime does not pay and criminals who think it does will have to deal with the full force of the MPS."

Officers warned

TWO Tower Hamlets police constables have been given final written warnings after breaching the Met's standards of professional behaviour.

PCs Gavin Bateman and Tony Stephenson stopped to buy a cup of tea at a fast food restaurant before responding to a call to check on the welfare of a vulnerable woman in Poplar.

The officers attended a public gross misconduct hearing to answer allegations they had breached standards of professional behaviour in respect of 'duties and responsibilities'.

After considering all the evidence and mitigation the panel found the allegations proven as misconduct only. The officers had previously admitted their actions.

Couple stole £230k

A MARRIED couple have been found guilty of stealing £230,000 from a butcher's shop in Stratford where they worked.

Kevin Quirk, 54, and his wife Brenda, 52, both of Walnut Way, Buckhurst Hill, were sentenced at Snaresbrook Crown Court.

Mr Quirk was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, suspended for 24 months, ordered to do 300 hours of community service and to pay a victim surcharge of £100.

Mrs Quirk was sentenced to eight months' imprisonment, suspended for 24 months, ordered to do 100 hours of community service and to pay a victim surcharge of £100.

Seven other employees were found not guilty.

The theft took place between June 2006 and February 2015 at Dewhursts of Stratford.

Assault on girl

NEIL Cuthbertson, 51, was jailed at the Old Bailey for five and a half years after pleading guilty to serious sexual assault on a girl under 13 at Hamley's Toy Store in Westminster.

On November 8, 2015, Cuthbertson sexually assaulted the 11-year-old victim while watching a magic show at Hamley's Store in Regent Street.

Cuthbertson ran away from the location, but was caught and charged the following month.

Officer dismissed

A POLICE officer has been dismissed after admitting having an inappropriate relationship with a victim of crime.

A special hearing found PC Charlotte Peters breached standards of professional behaviour in respect of 'discreditable conduct' and 'honesty and integrity'.

After considering all the evidence and mitigation presented, the chair, Assistant Commissioner Martin Hewitt, found the allegations proven as gross misconduct and PC Peters was dismissed without notice.

PC Peters pleaded guilty at Southwark Crown Court last year pleaded guilty to misconduct in public office by having a sexual relationship with a vulnerable victim while working as a sexual offences investigating officer.

PC Peters was sentenced to 22 months' inprison and ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £100.

We're watching you

MOTORISTS will be forced to slow down over lengthy distances on some of the borough's busiest roads after it was confirmed new average speed check cameras have now gone live

The cameras, which will run on the A2 and A102 in Greenwich and Bexley, monitor average speed over a distance rather than at fixed points.

The new camera system replaces older fixed speed cameras along the A2 and A102 between the Blackwall Tunnel Approach and Dartford Heath where the speed limit is 50mph.

Got a story

IF you have an article related to crime and safety that you would like to submit please email us at peterfau67@gmail.com or contact Peter Faulkner on 01268-566743.

A new team, one voice

Newly-formed Watch team will become the true voice of the people helping to tackle crime in London

By Peter Faulkner

LONDON has a new team ready to become the new voice of the people and to support the police in tackling crime in the capital.

At the inaugural meeting, where Mark Glazer of Redbridge Neighbourhood Watch Trust was elected chair, the stated aims of the London Community Watch are to provide a focal point for Neighbourhood Watches across London, with two initial primary objectives:

1. To raise funds and provide resources to facilitate both the transition of NHW from Metropolitan Police led Boroughs to their communities and to assist existing borough associations in their development.
2. To provide a medium for the effective exchange of information between borough associations.

Mr Glazer said: "This is a pivotal moment in the history of NHW, London is taking a firm grasp on its own development, independent of any other organisation.

"This newly formed body will become the true

voice of the communities of London in our combined effort to help and support the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to actively reduce crime and promote personal safety in the Metropolis.

"With the support of MOPAC and the MPS, we intend to use the latest technologies to assist in communication and networking, to provide a useful support mechanism for all Neighbourhood watches in the Capital.

"By building a solid infrastructure and uniting our combined voluntary effort, we envisage the development of modernisation, co-operation and mutual understanding. We believe that working together will naturally produce strong positive endemic progress.

"Our intention is to provide strong leadership, without management. We hope to relieve some of the burden already placed on our police to develop community relationships.

"Any relationship between the London Boroughs and the Neighbourhood and Home Watch Network is beyond the initial remit of the trust and is for each borough to determine."



A TOTAL of 83 firearms and 1,175 rounds of ammunition were handed in during the Met's one-week gun surrender. Among the guns handed in were 22 live firearms, including an AK47 rifle and a pump-action shotgun. The full breakdown of the weapons surrendered is: 13 pistols, eight shotguns, one rifle (AK47), 40 air weapons/BB guns and 21 imitation guns.

During the 'amnesty' those handing in firearms could remain anonymous. All weapons and ammunition will be forensically checked for evidence to see if they might be linked to a crime.

The last firearm surrender in November 2015, which lasted two weeks, saw 10 live firing weapons handed in as well as 37 air weapons, 17 imitation weapons and 1,270 rounds of ammunition

How do you choose a reliable tradesperson?

Checkatrade.com
Where reputation matters

Our trades and services have been vetted to high standards. In fact up to 13 checks are carried out including ID, references, insurance, qualifications and professional memberships. Then we monitor their work on an on-going basis by collecting feedback directly from you, their customers.

When you're thinking about choosing your next tradesperson, take the guess work out of your decision.

CHECK OUT CHECKATRADE TODAY!



Blitz on mail conmen

Royal Mail promises to stop operators using the company for the purpose of distributing scam mail that usually targets the elderly

By Peter Faulkner

ELDERLY and vulnerable residents right across the country are to be safeguarded from letter frauds thanks to a major new Royal Mail scheme.

New measures are being introduced aimed at stopping fraudulent letters from being delivered under its bulk-mail contracts.

And the dramatic change, which could save thousands of potential elderly victims falling prey to criminals, is all thanks to the Daily Mail.

Their years of campaigning against scam mail, which forced Prime Minister Theresa May to call for action, has finally paid off and hopefully it will bite a huge hole in the revenue of crooks.

Conmen employ firms abroad to print millions of their scam letters, which are carried to the UK by other companies before being sorted and put into the Royal Mail system for delivery.

Because they fall under Royal Mail's bulk-mail contracts, they have the company's branding on them and vulnerable victims believe they are genuine

Crucially, the new terms will allow the firm to rip open post believed to be a con – a measure called for by the Mail.

Royal Mail will also demand that all suppliers sign a new industry-wide code of practice. Clients will have to commit to working with regulators to help stop frauds.

It includes sharing information about operators who may be distributing scams – a move some postal operators have resisted in the past.

Under the code they must also ban suppliers – who may be based abroad – from sending fraudulent letters into the UK.

Postal workers had told the Daily Mail of their anxiety about having to deliver piles of letters they knew were designed to scam vulnerable people out of huge sums. The newspaper revealed the conmen involved, with undercover footage showing how they boasted of 'ripping off' their 'proposed' victims and openly traded 'suckers lists' of the most vulnerable.

In addition to getting Royal Mail branding on their envelopes, the firms involved also benefited from the company's discounted bulk postage rates.

After the revelations, the Prime Minister warned Royal Mail it must do more to stop the practice, while MPs, campaigners and charities accused the company of 'knowingly profiting from fraud'.

Royal Mail's new rules, which came into force on March 27, are designed to stop scam letters from the source and prevent them from reaching customers, bosses say.

Two of Royal Mail's biggest partners have signed up to the code of practice. One is Whistl, which the Mail found had been distributing thousands of scam letters.

Shop a crook

A NEW confidential consumer crime reporting system for Londoners has been launched.

London Trading Standards are seeking tip-offs from consumers about rogue trading, scams and other illegal trading practices.

Reports of consumer crime can now be sent anonymously via the London Trading Standards website. Information will then be assessed on behalf of the 33 member Boroughs and shared via their regional intelligence service.

Consumers already benefit from a free national advice service provided by Citizens Advice.

The new tool complements this by providing the opportunity to send anonymous information about consumer crime in London.

Fraudulent claims

DATA from the Association of British Insurers (ABI) reveals that insurers detected more than 130,000 fraudulent claims last year.

This was the equivalent of 2,500 each week and marking an increase of 6% on 2014's figures. However, the value of those frauds decreased, with the total of £1.3bn down 3% year-on-year.

There was a particular rise in dishonest liability insurance claims, such as "slip and trip" claims.

The number detected rose by 36% to 26,900, while the value (£391m) was up by 14% on 2014.

Hit-and-run

A HIT-and-run driver who deliberately used his car as a weapon leaving a man fighting for his life has been jailed for 14 years.

Zeeshan Babar, 23, of Bulwark Court, Parkside Square, Isle of Dogs, was sentenced at the Old Bailey after pleading guilty to grievous bodily harm with intent and arson with intent to endanger life.

He was sentenced to five years' for the arson to run concurrently and disqualified from driving for 12 years.

Babar sped round the corner in Zetland Street and as one man was thrown out of the vehicle Babar ran over the man before doing a U-turn and almost hitting him a second time.

Police Commander expresses his feelings on the terrorist attack in Tunisia in 2015 and admits it was an event that shocked the whole nation

I was humbled by courage of the people

COMMANDER Dean Haydon of the Met Police Counter Terrorism Command said the impact of the terrorist attack in Sousse, Tunisia, was felt by the whole nation not just the families.

The Coroner at London's Royal Courts of Justice inquests in London last month decided that "30 Britons were unlawfully killed by Islamic State gunman Selfeddine Rezgul on June 26, 2015.

Within minutes of the verdict being announced Commander Haydon spoke out saying: "As a police officer, I have been determined to ensure that we do the best we can for those families.

"When I heard that British holiday-makers had been killed in a suspected terrorist attack in Sousse, I - like so many of us - was shocked.

"The attack in which the overwhelming majority of victims - 30 out of 38 people killed and 17 out of 34 injured - were British, was an attack on our nation.

They were parents, grandparents, children, siblings and partners, just like us.

"It required a major British operation to ensure that the victims, survivors and their families received the support they needed and that the most comprehensive evidence was gathered.

"The British police, with our unique experience and expertise, had a central role to play in this.

"My command worked with police forces and partners around the UK to launch a huge policing response. Officers with exceptional expertise in victim care, working overseas and counter terrorism investigations, pulled together to carry out this work quickly, sensitively and thoroughly.

"Following the attack, officers flew out to Sousse, where they quickly developed a working relationship with the Tunisian authorities, so they could keep families informed about the investigation.

"Back in the UK, a team of more than 100 specialist family liaison

officers from 16 UK police forces were assigned to support more than 300 family members affected by the tragedy.

"They provided them with guidance on what was happening in Tunisia and ensured that relatives were given access to support agencies. They also provided support to the survivors in the lead up to the inquest.

"Meanwhile a team of my officers travelled to airports across the UK to speak to over 2,000 people returning from Tunisia - all were potential witnesses to the attack and whose statements would be crucial.

"Met Police officers in Sousse used specialist technology to create a detailed digital reconstruction of the area, the movements of the attacker and those who died and were injured.

"This was a task that involved a week of capturing images in Sousse and months of development afterwards, and enabled us to present to the Coroner and the families a detailed and accurate depiction of the scene at the inquests.

"The impact of the attack was felt by the whole nation but none-more-so than the survivors, families and friends of those who died - as a police officer, I have been determined to ensure that we do the best we can for them.

"As a father and a husband, I have been humbled by their sheer courage and dignity in the face of such incomprehensible tragedy."



Comm Dean Haydon



ONE OF..



US tourist Staci Martin took this photo of her with PC Palmer 45 minutes before he was knifed to death - it was probably one of the last photos taken of the brave officer.

This issue of LCW magazine has been sponsored by **Checkatrade.com** Where reputation matters



The irony of this exercise...

THIS is an ironic image. It was taken four days before the horrific bloodbath at Westminster and it took place within earshot of the Houses of Parliament.

Yet this was a terrorist exercise by the Metropolitan Police Service, along with emergency service partners, carrying out the first joint major live-play exercise to test their response to a terrorist threat on the River Thames.

More than 200 Met Police officers and staff took part in the exercise, code named 'Exercise Anchor'. This was played out on Sunday March 19 and who would have thought it was the prelude to the real thing.

The majority of the activity taking place along Blackwall Reach on the river Thames, near the Isle of Dogs and the scenario involved a group of terrorists hijacking a passenger pleasure boat on the Thames and taking a number of hostages, to travel up the Thames to Central London to carry out a terrorist attack.

It was designed to test the response and command and control protocols of emergency services, working with maritime partners, in dealing with this kind of situation in a marine environment.

...OUR MANY HEROES

By Peter Faulkner
POLICE Constable Keith Palmer is an example of the gratitude we owe every police officer who patrols our streets.

PC Palmer gave his life last month when Dartford-born terrorist Khalid Masood tried to gatecrash the Houses of Parliament in Westminster.

Despite confronting the knife-wielding maniac, who had earlier mowed down dozens of innocent people, tourists, businessmen and office workers as they walked across Westminster Bridge, the officer tried to disarm him.

PC Palmer, a familiar face at the gates of Parliament for the last 15 years, bravely tackled the attacker to prevent him getting into the House and was knifed to death because of his bravery.

Seconds later armed officers gunned down the man who had killed four people - tourist Kurt Cochran, resident Aysha Frade and 75 year old Leslie Rhodes of Streatham - and also injured 50 others on the streets of Westminster.

PC Palmer was a hero. He typified

exactly what our brave and courageous officers have to confront every day and how they are prepared to put their bodies in the way to save lives.

The thin Blue Line has been decimated by cutback after cutback, yet the officers in all 32 London boroughs, those in the Home Counties like Essex, Suffolk, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Berkshire, and the Thames Valley, as well as those serving your community right across the United Kingdom, still put their lives on the line to protect us all.

We owe them a massive debt. They are all unsung heroes.

And kindhearted people everywhere are making sure that PC Palmer's wife Michelle - who works for Newham Council - and his young daughter, are not left in financial hardship as a result of his murder. A JustGiving page on the net was approaching the £1million mark as we went to press.

London mayor Sadiq Khan called PC Palmer's actions courageous and vowed the terrorists will never win.

Mayor Khan said: "PC Palmer was killed while bravely doing his duty - protecting our city and the heart of our democracy from those who want

to destroy our way of life.

"My heart goes out to his family, friends and colleagues. He personifies the brave men and women of our police and emergency services who work around the clock to keep us safe - all Londoners are grateful to them."

Conservative MP **James Cleverly**, paid tribute to the 'lovely man' he had known for a quarter of a century.

He said of the 48-year-old father and husband: I've known Keith for 25 years. We served together in the Royal Artillery before he became a copper.

"A lovely man, a friend. I'm heartbroken. My thoughts are with the family, friends and colleagues of Pc Keith Palmer. A brave man."

Mr Cleverley, the MP for Braintree, Essex, asked Prime Minister Theresa May if she would consider honouring PC Palmer with a posthumous bravery award. She said this would be considered in the fullness of time.

Police said 52-year-old killer Masood had used a number of aliases. He was born Adrian Elms, went to school in Tunbridge Wells where he was known as Adrian Ajao and was brought up by a single-mother in East Sussex.



Killed - tourist Kurt Cochran

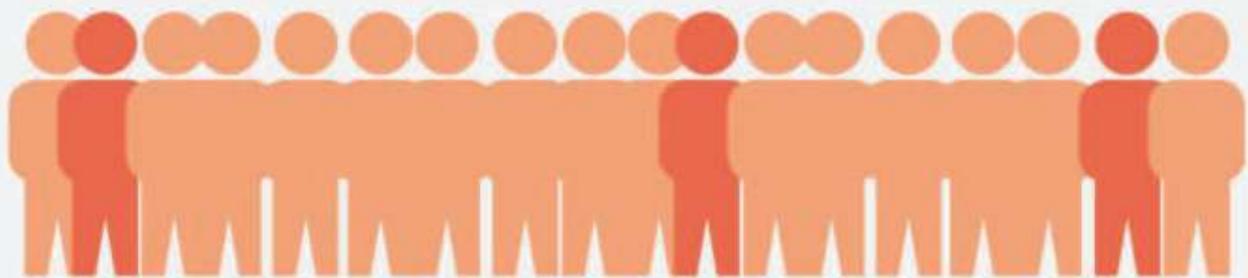


Killed - resident Aysha Frade

Checkatrade.com

Where reputation matters

How do you choose a reliable tradesperson?



When you need work done around your home, finding reputable trades is difficult. Can you really trust them? Since 1998 Checkatrade has been a FREE service giving you the background information you need to make a confident decision when inviting trades into your home.

Our trades and services have been vetted to high standards. In fact 20 checks are carried out including ID, references, insurance, qualifications and professional memberships. Then we monitor their work on an on-going basis by collecting feedback directly from you, their customers.



Joining Checkatrade has allowed us to reach new customers, as our work is monitored by the people who really matter... our customers. It provides new customers with the ability to choose a trade with honest reviews and also the peace of mind that every year we have to meet the strict criteria set by Checkatrade."

Sunrise Plumbing & Heating



So when you're thinking about choosing your next tradesperson, take the guess work out of your decision and don't be the victim of a rogue trade.



Fraud still rising, but new measures prevented more money being taken

Fraud is still rising

Take Five campaign encourages people to safeguard their details so they do not become another victim of financial fraud

By Peter Faulkner

FINANCIAL fraud is continuing to increase, but there is a silver lining to the latest figures announced last month.

Financial Fraud Action UK said frauds from payment cards, remote banking and cheques totalled £768.8m in 2016 - an increase of 2 per cent.

But the good news is that banks and card companies prevented £1.38 billion of fraud last year, equivalent to £6.40 in every £10 of attempted fraud being stopped.

Impersonation and deception scams, as well as online attacks to compromise data, continued to be the primary drivers behind financial fraud losses in 2016.

In all of these methods criminals target personal and financial information, including card data, which is then used to facilitate fraud.

The 2016 financial fraud data shows:

■ Losses due to payment card fraud were £618.0 million, an increase of 9 per cent from £567.5 million in 2015. A total of £982.4 million of attempted card fraud was prevented by banks and card companies, equivalent to £6.10 in every £10 of fraud being stopped.

■ Over 2016, card spending increased by six per cent, meaning card fraud as a proportion of spending equates to 8.3p for every £100 spent.

■ Within the overall card fraud figures, losses on card purchases made remotely increased by 9 per cent to £432.3 million.

■ Remote banking fraud losses totalled £137.1 million, 19 per cent up from £168.6 million in 2015. A total of £205.4 million of attempted remote fraud losses were prevented, equivalent to £6 in every £10 of fraud being stopped.

■ Cheque fraud losses fell by 28 per cent to £13.7 million, the lowest ever annual total. A total of £196.2 million of attempted cheque fraud was prevented, equivalent to £9.40 in every £10 of fraud being stopped.

■ There were a total of 1,857,506 cases of financial fraud.

Katy Worobec, Director of Financial Fraud Action UK (FFA UK), said: "Banks take the threat of fraud extremely seriously and continuously invest in advanced detection and verification systems to protect customers.

"At the same time criminals continue in their attempts to circumvent this security by targeting customers for their personal and security information. It's vital that everyone follows the advice of our Take Five campaign and safeguards their details.

"The payments industry can't stop all fraud on its own, so it's essential that every organisation with a role to play unites to tackle it"

FFA UK is running the Take Five to Stop Fraud campaign, backed by every major bank and card company, to raise awareness of these scams and how customers can protect themselves.

Last month there was a dedicated day of activities in thousands of bank branches across the country as part of the campaign.

Take Five urges people to guard their personal and financial details and never to assume an email, text or phone call is authentic, even if it includes a reference to some of their basic details.

It reminds people to pause and think carefully before responding to any requests for information and not to be pressured into making decisions.

£50,000 swindle

A MAN who swindled his employer out of more than £50,000 has been jailed for 20 months.

Jake Rattray, 28, of Oakdale Road, Streatham, was sentenced at Camberwell Green Magistrates' Court last month.

He pleaded guilty to two counts of fraud by false representation at the same court on November 28, 2016.

Between January 2015 and June 2016, Rattray stole £50,599.61 from his South Lambeth company. Between January 2015 and June 2016, Rattray made 22 refunds on the company's system, but none of the transactions were valid. He was issuing refunds to customers who did not need refunds.

PC is suspended

A METROPOLITAN Police officer has been given a three-month suspended sentence and ordered to pay £1,000, BY Southwark Crown Court.

PC Gareth Knight, 38, attached to Lambeth, was found guilty of causing common assault and actual bodily harm.

On January 30, 2016, PC Knight arrested a man in Brixton on suspicion of possession of drugs in Brixton.

During the course of the arrest PC Knight attempted to headbutt the man and pushed his head forcibly into a wall.

In addition to the suspended sentence, PC Knight was told to pay £500 in compensation to the victim, £500 in court costs and given 150 hours unpaid community work.

He was suspended from duty following conviction. A misconduct review will take place now criminal proceedings have concluded.

Left for dead

A MAN has been jailed for ten years after stabbing his victim twice in the chest and leaving him critically injured and left for dead in a street in Isleworth.

Mohad Mohamed, 20, of Holderness Close, Isleworth was sentenced at Kingston Crown Court for wounding with intent to cause GBH.

He was originally charged with attempted murder but pleaded guilty to wounding with intent to cause GBH at the same court on Wednesday, January 11.

London court round-up

Two burglars threatened a seven year old girl with an air rifle

TWO burglars who threatened a man and his seven-year-old daughter with an air rifle have been jailed for burglary and firearms offences. Ricky Mantell, 31, of Overton Road, Abbey Wood, and Alfie Colin Powell, 23, of South Road, Erith, were convicted at the Inner London Crown Court last month possession of an air rifle with intent to cause fear of violence and burglary. Powell got nine years and Mantell eight.

In September last year the pair carried out a burglary at a business in Darent Industrial Park, Erith, getting away with £10,000 worth of goods including a Rolex watch. The owner of the business arrived at the site with his daughter, aged just seven, when they noticed Mantell and Powell, armed with an air rifle and a golf club, fleeing the scene.

The pair threatened the victim and his daughter with the guns and took off at rear of the site, jumping over a fence and running along a tow-path, towards Erith Yacht Club. Anticipating their movements, the owner of the business and a colleague drove to the Erith Yacht Club where they expected the getaway vehicle to be parked and were met by Mantell and Powell.

Again the pair threatened the victims with an air rifle before getting into Mantell's distinctive yellow Ford transit, mounting the pavement and driving off. Enquires later revealed that Mantell was the main user of the van and the pair were later arrested by Bexley Crime Squad.



Ricky Mantell



Alfie Powell

Victim had 50 stitches

A VIOLENT robber who repeatedly glassed his victim in the face before stealing his property has been jailed for 12 years at the Old Bailey.

Mowleed Abdullahi, 18, of Bancroft Gardens, Harrow, was sentenced for grievous bodily harm with intent and robbery.

Police were called to Charles II Street, Westminster, on January 6 following reports of an assault.

Officers found a 41-year old man lying unconscious and suffering from serious facial injuries. He was taken to hospital and treated for numerous injuries to his face and head - he required more than 50 stitches. He has since been discharged.

Officers conducted CCTV enquiries which established that two men were involved in the robbery and assault of the victim.

The footage showed two suspects approached the victim from behind. The first suspect then pulled the victim to the ground at which point Abdullahi, launched a prolonged attack with a glass bottle.

The first suspect then removed the victim's expensive Rolex watch and ran off. The victim's mobile phone, cash and credit/debit cards were also stolen during the incident.

A serial fraudster

A FORMER employee of the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) has been sentenced for defrauding the organisation of thousands after pleading not guilty to doing the same thing to two other employers.

Lorna Snelling, 40, of Jasmine Road, Rush Green, Romford, was sentenced to eighteen months suspended for two years at the Old Bailey following an investigation by the City of London Police's fraud teams.

She was also ordered to do 200 hours unpaid work and ordered to pay £20k compensation. She earlier pleaded guilty at Old Bailey on the 21 October 2016.

Snelling was employed by ATOC during 2015 as their Transaction Manager, a role that enabled her to access the organisations accounting system to authorise payments.

She was already being investigated for suspected fraud relating to her two previous employers, Berkeley Homes and Beazley insurance and on February 5, 2016 she was sentenced to two years imprisonment, suspended for two years, for eight counts of fraud after she stole a total of £21k.

On the day of her first appearance for the earlier case she pleaded not guilty at City of London Magistrates Court to stealing from either employer and after court she walked into Lloyds Bank on Cheapside and cashed a forged ATOC cheque valuing £16k into her bank account.

Snelling left ATOC in August 2015 and the organisation later uncovered that she had paid cheques into her personal accounts totalling £21k. She had done this by forging the signatures of account holders.

Jailed for manslaughter

BROTHERS James and Peter Weeks were jailed for a total of 13 and a half years at the Old Bailey for the manslaughter of 49-year-old Ian O'Mahoney, killed in a fight over a trivial argument in a pub.

James Weeks, 27, of Farn Place, Crayford, got six years and Peter Weeks, 29, of the same address got seven and a half years.

The court heard how on August 29, last year, police were called by the London Ambulance Service after they found a man unresponsive at an address in Churchbury

Road, Eltham. The man, Ian O'Mahoney, was pronounced dead at the scene.

During the trial at the Old Bailey, the court heard how Mr O'Mahoney and a friend went to the Drafts pub in Eltham High Street.

The pair left the pub as they walked down Eltham High Street, Mr O'Mahoney's friend was attacked by Peter and James Weeks.

Mr O'Mahoney tried to help his friend and got caught up in the fight. Witnesses later told police that during the fight Mr O'Mahoney had been thrown to the ground and had hit his head.

The fight was apparently instigated after insults had been exchanged with one of the brothers in the pub. They were charged with murder, but were subsequently found not guilty of this offence but convicted of manslaughter.

Both men were also charged with actual bodily harm relating to the assault on Mr O'Mahoney's friend. Peter Weeks pleaded guilty to this offence, while James Weekes denied the charge but was found guilty.

Sex attack in toy store

WOOLWICH drug dealer Mojtab Moradi, 30, of Brookhill Road, Greenwich, was jailed for four years at Woolwich Crown Court last month

Officers from the Greenwich Gangs Unit and Proactive Crime Squad stopped Moradi in a Nissan Qashqai in Willenhall Road, and he was found in possession of 46 wraps of crack cocaine.

Then they searched Moradi's room and discovered a ledger with details of his supplies, and other drug dealing paraphernalia.

Moradi appeared at Woolwich Crown Court and was found guilty by a jury of possessing crack cocaine with intent to supply.



OFFICERS from the Metropolitan Police Service's Central North Command, which covers the London boroughs of Camden and Islington, took to the streets last month with Body Worn Video (BWV) following its official launch. They were issued to around 1,200 police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) working in Camden and Islington.

Additional cameras will also be available for specialist departments. The cameras have already shown they can help bring speedier justice for victims. They have proved particularly successful in domestic abuse cases where there has been an increase in earlier guilty pleas from offenders who know their actions have been recorded.

Blue badge fraud blitz

Barnet fraud officers seize 11 disabled parking badges during a day-long sweep to find offenders

By Peter Faulkner

BARNET Council has continued its blitz on blue badge fraud and their message is simple: "If you are caught misusing the badge you can expect to face the consequences."

In the latest operation across the borough, counter-fraud officers seized 11 disabled parking badges including lost, stolen and counterfeit permits during a day-long sweep.

Officers from the council's Corporate Anti-Fraud Team (CAFT) carried out spot checks on 78 cars displaying Blue Badges while parked in the Hendon area.

Of the 11 badges seized, seven were found to be used by motorists to avoid parking restrictions without the badge holder being present, with checks revealing three permits had been reported lost or stolen, and one badge was found to be counterfeit.

Councillor Richard Cornelius, Council Leader, said: "These blue badges are intended for people in genuine need and it's a criminal offence for them to be misused.

"This operation found badges being used that have been reported lost or stolen and even a counterfeit permit.

"They are not intended to be used by people to park for free and avoid parking restrictions. "Anyone caught using one of these badges illegally can expect to be caught and ultimately face prosecution."

The operation also involved police officers and a parking enforcement officer. CAFT officers carry out regular spot checks across the borough. In addition to the badges seized, 11 cars were issued with parking penalties for badge misuse.

As a result of the spot checks, counter-fraud officers are now investigating 13 potential cases of Blue Badge fraud and misuse. Any motorists caught during the operation could now face prosecution.

Blue Badges can only be used by the named badge holder, or by a person who has dropped off or is collecting the badge holders from a place where the vehicle is parked.

It is a criminal offence for anyone else to use a Blue Badge in any other circumstances. To report a fraud call the fraud hotline 020 8359 2007 or visit www.barnet.gov.uk

Cheats avoid jail

TWO benefit cheats have been given suspended prison sentences after two separate court cases last month.

Danielle Jackson, formerly of Springfield Gardens, Bromley, who also supplied a forged letter from her employer and was given a two year suspended sentence at Woolwich Crown Court while Ricky Wootton, of Timbertop Road, was sentenced at Bromley Magistrates Court to four months in prison.

Jackson, 26,, who was additionally ordered to complete 250 hours of unpaid work, had been investigated by the council's Internal Audit and Anti-Fraud Team after suspicions about the authenticity of a letter she supplied from her employer

Santander confirmed the letter was fake and a credit report showed she had other undeclared accounts.

Jackson claimed the money belonged to other members of her family. She was found guilty and was also ordered to pay £4,000 costs and £100 victim surcharge.

Wootton, of Timbertop Road, Biggin Hill, pleaded guilty to claiming a single person discount on his council tax when in fact his brother had been living with him for 16 years.

The fraud had only come to light when the 50-year-old had been in hospital and his brother had answered a council tax query.

In total the discount amounted to £4,342 and Wootton must now pay £350 towards prosecution costs and a £115 victim surcharge and he was also ordered to undertake 200 hours of unpaid work.

Bottle attack

A MAN has been jailed for 10 years for attacking another man with a bottle in Clapham.

Steven Wilson, 42, of Clapham Road, Lambeth, was found guilty last month of wounding with intent to cause GBH.

He was sentenced the same day at inner London Crown Court to 10 years' imprisonment.

On July 4, 2016, Wilson became involved in an argument with a 60-year-old man in Alphonas Road.

Wilson threatened the victim - who was known to him - before striking him in the face with a glass bottle.

Do you know these sex pests?

THESE four nasty men are on the Metropolitan Police wanted list - because they couldn't keep their hands to themselves.

The Met's Police Roads and Transport Policing Command has released images of the men because they are all wanted in connection with separate sexual offences on the bus network.

The four sexual predators are:

Top left: Manohar Singh, 28, of no fixed address but known to frequent Hillingdon and Ealing. Arrested on June 9, 2016 at a bus stop in Hillingdon for sexually assaulting a teenage girl on a route 207 bus in Hayes. Failed to answer bail at Ealing Magistrates' Court on July 8.

Top right: Fabian Downie, 46, of no fixed address but known to travel on buses all over London and has previously been seen at White City bus station and New Cross bus station. He was charged in January with sexually touching a female on a route 36 bus to Victoria. Failed to answer bail at Westminster Magistrates' Court on January 31.

Bottom left: Wilson Figueroa, 50, no fixed address but known to frequent Greenwich, Southwark and central London, was arrested on October 29, 2015 in Fennel Street, Greenwich for sexually assaulting a teenage girl on a route 53 bus in Woolwich in September 2015. He was bailed to appear at Bexley Magistrates' Court on December 1, 2015.

Bottom right: Salih Simer Akin, 31, of Church Street, Enfield was arrested on October 5, 2016 for sexually assaulting a 12-year-old girl on a route W8 bus in Church Street, Enfield. Failed to appear at Wood Green Crown Court on March 6, but found guilty in his absence.

Contact police on 020 7232 7492 or at RTPC-FU@met.pnn.police.uk



It's payback time

CONMAN Zeyad El-Kaissi, OF Comeragh Road, West Kensington, jailed for seven years ago in 2015 for a council and housing tax scam, has been ordered to pay back hundreds of thousands of pounds to west London councils.

El-Kaissi illegally claiming housing and council tax and other benefits over a 12-year period by creating a false identity, Sam Casey.

Following a Proceeds of Crime Act hearing El-Kaissi was hit with a £350,000 confiscation order and told to pay £175,000 compensation to Hammersmith and Fulham Council, Kensington and Chelsea Council and the Department for Work and Pensions. The remainder will be confiscated.

Through his dual identities, 40-year-old El-Kaissi claimed housing and council tax benefit, jobseekers' allowance, employment and support allowance, incapacity benefit, disability living allowance, a disabled blue badge, public transport freedom pass and local authority housing.

Mr El-Kaissi had pretended to vacate his home, but remained living there as his rent-paying alter-ego.

The parents from hell

The pathologist described Rifat's horrific injuries as similar to those usually seen in a car crash or a fall from a great height.

By Ian Hunter

RIFAT Mohammed was only three-months-old when he died, but the multiple injuries he suffered were described as "similar to those seen in a car crash or a fall from a great height".

Those injuries were caused by the very person who should have been protecting him and loving him, his father Mohammed Miah.

At the Old Bailey Miah, 36, of St Leonard's Road, Poplar, was given a minimum 18 years for murder and seven years for allowing injury to a child.

The baby's mother Rebeka Nazmin, 32, was given six years for allowing the death of a child and three years' imprisonment for allowing injury to a child.

As they began their prison sentences, DI Ken Hughes of the Homicide and Major Crime Command, said: Detective Inspector Ken Hughes of Homicide and Major Crime Command said: "We may never know why a mother and father inflicted such terrible injuries on their own small baby.

"Even if we had that knowledge, I am not sure we could ever understand. This baby should have been protected and loved; instead he lived with hurt, indifference and brutality.

"I am glad that these two have been called to account for their actions and now face the consequences of their cruelty.

"While nothing can mitigate the consequences of this dreadful crime, I would ask any parents struggling to manage to understand that seeking

help is nothing to be ashamed of.

"Early intervention can help a family cope and organisations and charities, such as the NSPCC, will offer both advice and support."

The court heard that the London Ambulance Service was called to the home. Paramedics gave immediate first aid and the baby was rushed to hospital.

The paramedics, and other medical staff, recorded seeing signs of burning and bruising on Rifat's body. Suspicious of the injuries, the medical staff alerted police, who arrested both the parents.

They appeared in court originally charged with committing GBH with intent and three counts of child cruelty. Rifat died the next day.

A post mortem examination found Rifat had suffered a head injury which had starved his brain of oxygen.

It also showed he had 38 separate rib fractures - some still in the process of healing, bruising to his head, shoulder, back and burns to his left leg. He also had injuries to his limbs, eyes and neck. The pathologist described the injuries as similar to those usually seen in a car crash or a fall from a great height.

When interviewed Miah placed the blame elsewhere and said the burn to the baby's leg may have come from a radiator.

Nazmin blamed her husband, saying he was rough with Rifat. She could not account for the multiple injuries the baby had suffered.

Kids, 13, sold knives

“The illegal sale of knives can significantly impact on the health, safety and welfare of young people and the communities in which they live, so it’s important we work together to prevent them.”

By Peter Faulkner

SHOPKEEPERS in London are helping to fuel the knife-crime culture in the capital by selling weapons to under-age kids.

Figures released by London Trading Standards show children as young as 13 were able to buy knives in test purchasing carried out across the capital.

During the whole of 2016, 725 test purchases were carried out by London Trading Standards and the Metropolitan Police using child volunteers. The vast majority of shops visited refused to sell, but 96 retailers sold knives and bladed articles to children as young as 13.

Trading Standards Officers carried out the test purchasing as part of the crime prevention element of ‘Operation Sceptre’. This Police initiative is aimed at reducing knife crime and reducing the number families affected by knife crime.

In many cases young Police Cadets assisted with the work. The age range of the volunteers used was 13 to 17 years.

As a result of the sales 19 traders were prosecuted by Trading Standards, or have cases pending, whilst others received official warnings and compliance advice.

Minister for Vulnerability, Safeguarding and Countering Extremism Sarah Newton said: “Selling knives to children is illegal and I am delighted that London Trading Standards are taking action to enforce this and have found that the vast majority of retailers are complying with the law.

“Knife crime can have devastating consequences and this Government is acting against it, including banning the sale of so-called ‘zombie-knives’, supporting Operation Sceptre and expanding our work with retailers to stop the underage sale of knives.

“But the results of these test purchases shows there is still more to be done.”

Steve Playle, spokesperson for London Trading Standards said: “This partnership work to tackle the supply of knives to children has utilised London Trading Standards expertise in conducting test purchasing.

“Whilst it is commendable that 87% of shops refused to sell it is concerning that children as young as 13 were actually sold knives.

“The illegal sale of knives can significantly impact on the health, safety and welfare of young people and the communities in which they live, so it’s important that we work together to prevent them.

“Our officers are always willing to help retailers with training or compliance advice on avoiding underage sales and we recommend adopting a challenge 25 policy and checking ID when selling knives.

“Trading Standards Officers across London enforce laws to tackle the sale of age restricted products such as knives, alcohol and tobacco.

“However significant cuts to front line staff and



Minister for Vulnerability, Safeguarding and Countering Extremism Sarah Newton

funding makes it an ever more challenging job – particularly with competing priorities such as the sale of fake and unsafe goods, scams, rogue traders and doorstep crime.

“Despite these difficulties our teams remain determined to tackle the issues putting Londoners at risk and will continue to support Operation Sceptre activities in 2017.”

Chief Inspector of the Metropolitan Police’s Trident Central Gangs Command Gary Anderson said: “The most recent phase of Operation Sceptre involved around 2,000 activities across the capital to tackle knife crime, 65 of which were test purchases conducted by police in partnership with London Trading Standards Officers.

“As a result, 14 knives were purchased by our under-aged volunteers. The retailers who sold the knives were dealt with by the local Trading Standards Officers, present on the day”.

“Through the delivery of education programmes and targeted work on boroughs we have successfully managed to reduce the volume of gang-related knife crime.

“However, more work still needs to be done and we remain committed to working in partnership with Trading Standards to prevent knives from reaching dangerous hands and to reduce the number of families devastated by knife crime.”

Anyone with information about shops that sell age restricted products to children can report it anonymously via the website www.londontradingstandards.org.uk

Mayor Sadiq’s knife pledge

LONDON Mayor Sadiq Khan has pledged to tackle knife crime in the capital and he said last year: “For many communities, gang activity, the related threat of violence, and in particular knife crime, are a shocking daily reality.

“No Londoner deserves to live in fear, and nor does any young Londoner deserve to be sucked into the gang lifestyle for lack of hope, opportunity or a strong role model. **I will challenge gang culture and knife crime head on. I will:**

- Implement a tough knife crime strategy that focuses resources on the city’s gangs, cracking down on shops illegally selling knives and working on tougher community payback for those caught with knives, in addition to jail time and traditional sentencing.

- Work closely with local authorities, schools and youth services to develop anti-gang strategies, while working with community organisations to further youth engagement, building upon a review of the anti-gang Matrix system.

- Ensure that school liaison officers continue to work closely with schools, and continue to back the City Safe Haven initiative.

Police tackle a new epidemic

THE Metropolitan Police launched phase seven of Operation Sceptre, the London-wide initiative targeting knife crime, at the start of the year

Police activity included weapon sweeps, intelligence led stop and search, promoting knife bins and undertaking operations to tackle those wanted in connection with knife related and violent crime.

Operation Sceptre was originally launched by the Met in July 2015 aimed at reducing knife crime and the number families affected by knife crime across the whole of London.

The launch was designed to coincide with new legislation that means that those convicted of carrying a knife for the second time will face a mandatory custodial sentence.

Disgraced nurse jailed for stealing from people she cared for

SHARON Vitalis was no Florence Nightingale. She might have been a nurse by name, but she became a disgrace to her profession.

While she pretended to look after patients at hospitals and nursing homes in London and Kent, Vitalis was actually stealing more than £13,000 from elderly patients in her care.

Following an investigation by Greenwich council, Vitalis, a former NHS nurse, was jailed for 28 months at Woolwich Crown Court last month after pleading guilty to stealing from eight elderly patients in her care. Ms Vitalis was charged with 14 counts of fraud totalling £13,052.88

The thefts took place whilst she worked as a nurse in Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Woolwich, Queen Marys Hospital in Sidcup and as a carer at the Time Court

Nursing Home in Charlton and the Sidcup Nursing Home.

Greenwich council's Internal Audit and Anti Fraud team launched an investigation after relatives of a Greenwich resident reported she may have had £600 taken from her while at the Time Court Nursing Home.

The investigation identified three transactions from the victims account including one to an on-line betting company which confirmed to the council that all winnings would go to a bank account owned by Sharon Vitalis. It was found that the 44-year-old from Kale Road, Erith, had been working at the nursing home at the time.

Officers then investigated payments into her account and found cheques ranging from £1,000 to £2,5000 had purportedly been made payable to Ms Vitalis from elderly residents that had also been in her care from January 2013 to August 2015.



Sharon Vitalis

Crooks rob an old lady of her treasured memories

THIS is the image of a cruel and callous conman police are hunting after he and an accomplice stole the treasured memories of an 87-year-old Hackney widow.

It took just a matter of minutes for this man and his crooked pal to charm their way into the woman's house on the Woodberry Down Estate then disappear with the old lady's irreplaceable memories.

The robbery has left the vulnerable woman devastated because among the sentimental items the two men stole were her engagement ring given to her in 1950 by her late husband.

She was alone in her home when two men pretending to be from a water company knocked on her door and said they needed to check her water pipes.

One of the men ran the taps in the kitchen while the other so-called workman disappeared, ransacking her bedroom of thousands of pounds worth of cash and jewellery.

It was only after the two suspects had left, after claiming the plumbing fault had been fixed, that the distraught victim discovered her home had been looted.

Around £3,000 in cash and £2,000 worth of jewellery was stolen in the raid along with several hugely sentimental items of jewellery.

As well as losing her engagement ring, the crooks stole a gold sovereign on a chain with the inscription 'Elizabeth 1967', a diamond solitaire ring with a gold band, a three stone sapphire ring, a thirty inch gold chain, a ruby



E-fit of the second suspect

ring with a gold band and a woman's wrist watch with a small face and gold strap.

Police have now released an e-fit image of one of the suspects after a witness saw two men fleeing the scene following the burglary.

The men have been described as white, in their 30s. The first was described as slim with short blonde hair and the second as stocky with dark hair. Both men were wearing high visibility jackets.

DI Paul Ridley, who is leading the hunt for the suspects, said: "This is a despicable and cowardly crime targeting an elderly widow and stealing her life possessions. If anyone has experienced something similar to this we would urge them to come forward.

"We are appealing for information from anyone that recognises the image of the suspect on the e-fit to contact my investigation team as a priority.

"I also need to know whether you have been offered any items of the distinctive jewellery, perhaps in a professional capacity at a pawnbrokers or jewellers or noticed it in someone's possession.

"I can personally assure you that all information received will be treated in the strictest of confidence and immediately acted upon."

Police are reminding people to always verify the identity of anyone that comes to their door. If they are genuine then they will be able to provide identification. If in doubt do not let them in and call 999.

Anyone who can assist police is urged to contact the police non-emergency number 101, or by tweeting @MetCC.

To give information anonymously contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or visit crimestoppers-uk.org. If the information you supply to Crimestoppers leads to an arrest and charge, you could get a cash reward of up to £1,000.