

## ***News from the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG)***

### ***MAG releases first of its kind national motorcycle theft rankings by UK police force area.***

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***The Motorcycle Action Group has released a national police force ranking system for motorcycle theft. Following analysis of Freedom of Information responses the most complete picture of the national levels of motorcycle theft are now available for all to see.***

The ranking system aims to demonstrate in a fair and balanced manner the level of motorcycle theft around the entire UK. To give a fair representation things like geographic size and population differences between police force areas have been allowed for by calculating a figure for the number of thefts per thousand registered motorcycles in each force area.

All 45 territorial police forces responded to MAG's FOI requests, but sadly 2 failed to meet the deadline to be included in the published ranking and a further six were unable to give the theft data within the constraints of the FOI regulations.

MAG's Director of Campaigns & Political Engagement, Colin Brown, commented:

"It is disappointing that we do still have gaps in the overall picture, and we will be urging the eight forces that could not help this time round to consider ways to give us the data for future revisions. We will be running the ranking on an annual basis.

MAG is clear that the purpose of the ranking system is not to point fingers, but rather to assist all parties in better understanding the issues and opportunities to combat what is probably one of the most pressing concerns for many bikers.

For a biker, the theft of their bike is most definitely not a victimless crime. More so than for any other mode of transport, riders become very emotionally attached to their bikes. For some loss of a bike is akin to the loss of a family member. It is unsurprising that this passion stirs up much emotion, and with motorcycles currently being seven times more likely to be stolen than any other form of vehicle, we have a massive issue that needs to be confronted head on.

We can only start to solve a problem if we first understand it. This work is only the beginning as far as we are concerned and we are already endeavouring to speak to and work with the forces that are showing the worst results.

We are fully engaged with the Metropolitan Police Force and will be involved in discussions with the MET in September. We met the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Mark Burns Williamson, in August and have approached the PCCs for all forces showing above average levels of motorcycle theft."

The rankings show that the Metropolitan Police Force area (which for the purposes of the ranking combines the Metropolitan and City of London forces) as the worst performing with 82 of every 1000 registered bikes stolen in 2018. Second place goes to West Yorkshire with 56 per 1000 stolen. Best ranked was Derbyshire with just 1 in every 1000 bikes stolen.

The full report can be found here: [https://wiki.mag-uk.org/images/e/e7/Rankings\\_August\\_2019.pdf](https://wiki.mag-uk.org/images/e/e7/Rankings_August_2019.pdf)

Colin Brown said “The fact that well over 60% of all thefts happen in just 6 police force territories is a clear demonstration that a concerted effort in those locations can make a vast difference to the national picture. We will be seeking to work with those forces to ensure that everything that can be done is done. We will not sit back and simply complain that more needs to be done, but hopefully a bit of healthy competition between forces will work in our favour.

Compiling this information has taught me many things already, from the differing methods of recording crime in use across the country, to the variation in performance levels when it comes to recording all crime, as well as the stark variation in levels of motorcycle theft across the country. Any analysis tends to lead to more questions, but it is only by asking those questions that we make progress.”

MAG gave opportunity for the worst performing forces to have sight of the statistics in advance of publishing the data, and asked for statements from them.

West Midlands Police issued the following statement:

“As a force we are committed to tackling vehicle crime and have introduced short and long term measures to reduce the problem.

We take all reports of theft seriously and investigate proportionately.

If you see any suspicious behaviour, please let us know, no matter how small it may seem.

For more information on how to keep your car or motorcycle safe from thieves, check out our dedicated website.”

Mark Burns-Williamson, West Yorkshire’s Police and Crime Commissioner, said: “Having been contacted by the Motorcycle Action Group, I arranged to meet them, along with West Yorkshire Police, to discuss the ongoing work to help address and reduce motorcycle thefts across West Yorkshire as well as what more we could do together in partnership. The meeting resulted in a number of actions that we will be working towards.

“Whilst these types of offences are always going to be more prevalent in larger metropolitan police force areas that does not mean we are complacent.

Robust law enforcement has a big part to play and where there are positive lines of enquiry West Yorkshire Police will investigate and seek appropriate actions and prosecutions.

We would also ask motorcycle owners to take extra precautionary steps where possible to help reduce their chances of being targeted by criminals. These can include adding an immobiliser, using a steering lock or storing your bike out of sight at night. More advice is available by visiting West Yorkshire Police’s website.

The fact that we are rated as outstanding by the HMICFRS in our crime recording will also affect our standing in MAG’s ranking. I understand this won’t bring much comfort to anyone that has unfortunately been targeted by thieves but it does mean that we have a solid base with which to understand the full extent of these incidents and work towards tackling them.

Going forward we will continue to build on our relationship with MAG in working to tackle these issues together and have agreed a number of positive stems linking in with our crime prevention leads.”

MAG looks forward to more productive engagement with West Yorkshire and all other forces where motorcycle theft is showing its ugly face.

Contact MAG at 01926 844 064 or [central-office@mag-uk.org](mailto:central-office@mag-uk.org)

ENDS

### **Notes for Editors**

The full rankings report can be found here: [https://wiki.mag-uk.org/images/e/e7/Rankings\\_August\\_2019.pdf](https://wiki.mag-uk.org/images/e/e7/Rankings_August_2019.pdf)

Two forces, Leicestershire and Humberside, requested further time to respond to the FOI requests but have yet to provide data.

Six forces were unable to provide theft data for motorcycles within the constraints of the FOI regulations. Those forces were: Essex, Hampshire, Police Scotland, South Wales, Thames Valley and Wiltshire Police.

FOI regulations permit a body to decline to respond if the cost of obtaining the information exceeds £450.

National Average theft rate has been calculated from Police National Computer data which is known to vary from recorded thefts. PNC figures are believed to be lower than recorded crime figures.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) carries out Crime Data Integrity Inspections on all forces. These inspections show varying accuracy between forces crime reporting. The results of the HMICFRS inspections were used to create a simple adjustment to the reported theft figures, which did lead to some changes in the rankings. The adjusted rankings are shown in the full report.