

Please ask for: Georgie Bateman
Telephone Number: 0121 626 6060
wmpcc@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk



west midlands
police and crime
commissioner

Rt Hon Grant Shapps

Sent by email only:
shappsq@parliament.uk

23rd March 2022

Dear Grant Shapps,

As you might be aware, there was a rise in vehicle thefts in Britain last year with almost 48,400 vehicles recorded as stolen in 2021.

There are a number of factors which are driving the significant increase in car thefts across the country. There is a global shortage of semiconductors and therefore the value of second-hand car parts has skyrocketed, making the market for car theft a lucrative one. The introduction of keyless technology has also led to the dramatic increase. Whilst I acknowledge this technology has made life more convenient for motorists, it has also made stealing vehicles easier for criminals.

Alongside this, the majority of car thefts are thought to be carried out by organised criminals who have begun to use technology to get around the onboard electronic security systems, such as copying digital keys or using devices to stop a car from locking.

West Midlands Police have prioritised car crime and are going after the organised criminals who are profiting from the thefts, but we also need manufacturers to look again at onboard car security features to ensure they are a top priority and fit for purpose.

In recent years West Midlands Police and I have been working hard to take meaningful action, having witnessed a dramatic rise in car theft in the West Midlands. With the aim of informing consumers about which vehicles are most commonly targeted, and therefore encourage manufacturers to improve security, we have been publishing data to show the vehicles most at risk.

Figures from West Midlands Police reveal that the manufacturer with the highest proportion of stolen cars was Abarth, with Alfa Romeo, Ford, Range Rover and Land Rover also ranking highly.

From 1992 until 2006 the Home Office started to published an annual car theft index which too, showed which cars were most at risk of being stolen. With the apparent ease at which criminals are able to steal cars, I urge you to reconsider publishing car theft data so that drivers across the country can make informed decisions about which vehicles to buy and pressure is put on car manufacturers to improve security.

Not enough is being done by car manufacturers to ensure the security of vehicles and I urge the government to be better at holding car manufacturers to account for the security vulnerabilities they are failing to address.

More needs to be done to prevent cars from being stolen and I would welcome the government's support in doing so.

I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Foster', with a stylized, cursive script.

Simon Foster
West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner