

# Rural Crime

## Self-help booklet

### What is Rural Crime?

Rural crime has no universal definition, but it can be understood as the offences and incidents affecting rural communities and households. This can be financially, emotionally, and/or physically.

Rural crime is commonly organised into four categories:

- Agricultural – incidents affecting farmland, farm machinery and buildings, such as the theft of equipment.
- Equine – offences covering equestrian centres and stables, like theft of tack or equipment.
- Wildlife – wildlife crimes are committed when legislation protecting UK plant and animal species is breached. This involves poaching, cruelty against animals, or introducing invasive species into the environment.
- Heritage – encompasses offences which harm the historical, heritage assets of the British countryside, including churches and ancient monuments. Illegal metal detecting is also classified as a rural crime under this category.

### What can you do?

Understand the Incident:

Rural crime encompasses many different incidents and offences. The first step may be to determine whether the incident you've experienced is a rural crime. To do so, see the above-stated categories and determine whether the incident you have experienced falls under one of them.

At the crime scene:

If you think a crime has occurred, try not to disturb the scene.

If it is safe to do so, try to take a photograph or video of the scene and record any key details of the crime, such as registration plates of vehicles involved.



#### Join Community Networks:

Consider joining or establishing a local crime watch group to enhance security and raise awareness. Some groups have communication channels to keep each other informed of possible threats in the area.

#### Security Measures:

If you feel at risk of rural crime, there are several measures you can implement

to protect your land, livestock, and property:

- Lock equipment and machinery away in a secure building when not in use.
- Install burglar alarms.
- Install outside security lights.
- Keep all doors and windows closed when not in use.
- Install CCTV cameras to cover the most vulnerable areas of your property.
- Consider the use of warning signs to deter thieves.
- Ensure that gates cannot be lifted, and their fixing bolts are secure.
- Equine equipment can be security marked with your postcode, which would enable the police to identify your tack in the unfortunate event of it being recovered after it being stolen.
- Ensure your livestock including horses and ponies are microchipped and the information is up to date



## **What can NSVCS Victim Services do?**

Through our victim services, we are here to support anyone who has been affected by rural crime. Our person-centred approach aims to empower and build resilience; we provide the necessary tools to navigate your recovery journey and move forward from the impact of crime. Support offered by our victims' services is free, independent and confidential, and available to victims and witnesses regardless of whether the crime has been reported or not.

## **We can help in the following ways:**

- Emotional support
- Advocacy
- Support through criminal justice processing
- Signposting and onward referrals
- Access to Restorative Justice
- Practical Support including crime prevention and safety advice



## Useful organisations

Metropolitan Police ([Rural crime](#) | [Metropolitan Police](#)) – offer more information on the nature of rural crime and advice on how to protect yourself, your property and livestock, from damage or theft.

Neighbourhood Watch ([Rural crime](#) | [Neighbourhood Watch Network](#)) – raises awareness about rural crime and lists rural crime survey results and insightful data.

National Wildlife Crime Unit ([uk](#) | [National Wildlife Crime Unit - NWCU](#)) – a website with links to report rural crime to the police or anonymously.

National Rural Crime Network ([Home - National Rural Crime Network](#)) – collaborate with local authorities, community groups and law enforcement to support rural communities in the fight against crime.

RSPCA ([The Largest Animal Welfare Charity in the UK](#) | [RSPCA - RSPCA - rspca.org.uk](#)) and RSPB ([The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds](#)) – both offer advice and information on what you can do to protect nature from harm.

Badger Trust ([Badger Trust: Report Badgers, Stop Badger Cull, Prevent Badger Crime in the United Kingdom](#)) – work to stop crimes being committed against badger species in England and Wales.

## Reporting

You can also report to the police:

- In an emergency always call 999.
- In a non-emergency call 101
- Report online - [Contact us](#) | [Police.uk](#)
- Visit a local police station
- To report a crime anonymously, contact Crimestoppers at 0800 555 111, or visit [Independent UK charity taking crime information anonymously](#) | [Crimestoppers](#)

Contact the RSPCA: You can report animal cruelty to the RSPCA online at [Report A Concern](#) | [RSPCA - RSPCA - rspca.org.uk](#)

