

Research Briefing

By Lulu Meade

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# Equipment Theft (Prevention) Bill



## Summary

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- 4 Commons stages

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## Summary

On 15 June 2022, Greg Smith presented to Parliament the [Equipment Theft \(Prevention\) Bill](#). The Bill's [Second reading debate took place on 2 December 2022](#) and the [Committee stage occurred on 1 February 2023](#). Report stage is scheduled to take place on 3 March 2023.

[Explanatory Notes](#) (PDF) have been published by the Home Office.

This Private Member's Bill is seeking to prevent the theft and resale of equipment and tools used by tradespeople and agricultural and other businesses, and for connected purposes.

Equipment and tool theft is a common issue in the UK. In rural areas, the theft of agricultural equipment including All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and quad bikes is a rising concern. The [National Farmers Union Mutual Insurance Society's Rural Crime Report 2022](#) (PDF) highlighted the damage caused by such thefts, which it said cost their customers £2.2 million in 2021. Tool theft is also a concern for many tradespeople – the most common targets are those who store and transport equipment in vans. The theft of tools is an issue across trades, with roofers and electricians amongst those most likely to be victims of tool theft.

At present, a number of practical strategies, including the installation of tool safes and the marking of tools and equipment are suggested by industry stakeholders to prevent such thefts. Independent companies have also developed apps to record ownership of tools. This is designed to help report thefts and discourage the resale of stolen tools.

During Second reading, [the Government confirmed it would support Greg Smith's Private Member's Bill](#) on the issue.

The Bill was widely supported at second reading and committee stage.

# 1 Background

## 1.1 The cost of tool theft

Equipment and tool theft is a common issue in the UK. Research by the Federation of Master Builders (FMB) estimated that in 2019, eight in 10 builders had their tools stolen.<sup>1</sup> Further research conducted by Direct Line Insurance found that more than £46 million worth of tools were reported as stolen from vehicles in the UK in the six months following April 2021, equating to £245,893 stolen every day.<sup>2</sup>

In rural areas, the theft of agricultural equipment including All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and quad bikes is a rising concern. The [National Farmers Union Mutual Insurance Society's Rural Crime Report 2022](#) (PDF) highlighted the damage caused by such thefts, which it said cost their customers £2.2 million in 2021.<sup>3</sup>

### Who does tool theft affect?

Tool theft is a concern for many tradespeople – the most common targets are those who store and transport equipment in vans. As Table 1 below shows, tool theft is an issue across trades, with roofers and electricians amongst those most likely to be victims of tool theft.

Roofers	65%
Electricians	58%
Plumbers	55%
Carpenters	54%
Builders	42%
Flooring/ tiling/ wallpapering technician	33%

Source: [Direct Line Group](#) (accessed 24 August 2022). Data based on a survey of 500 tradespeople working in the UK by Direct Line Insurance. The survey ran from 3-7 August 2020.

<sup>1</sup> Federation of Master Builders, [Tool theft affects 8 in 10 builders](#), 24 October 2019

<sup>2</sup> Direct Line Group, [More than £46 million worth of tools reported stolen from vehicles in the last six months](#), 2 November 2021

<sup>3</sup> NFU Mutual, [Ready for the returning threat: Rural Crime Report 2022](#) (PDF), 5 August 2022, p4

London, West Yorkshire and Northamptonshire are the areas worst affected by tool theft in the England, based on police force reports on the number of tools stolen between 2020 and 2021.<sup>4</sup>

Data collected by Herts Tools (a construction tool supplier) indicated that in London, powered hand tools are 10 times more likely to be stolen than mechanical hand tools, garden tools or building materials.<sup>5</sup>

## 1.2 What is driving tool theft?

The prominence of the second-hand tool market is helping to drive tool theft across the country. Second-hand tools are more affordable and can be relatively easy to source.

The second-hand tool market is not regulated which means sellers do not have to prove the origins of items they are selling or evidence the original purchase. Stakeholders and those working in trades have argued this encourages and facilitates tool theft because it makes selling stolen equipment simple and easy.

Research by Direct Line Insurance found that nearly a third of UK consumers have bought second-hand tools at some point, and six in 10 tradespeople have been approached by or have seen someone trying to sell second-hand tools which they suspected were stolen.<sup>6</sup>

In its 2022 Report, the National Farmers' Union (NFU) Mutual cited [current supply chain shortages as a factor increasing demand for equipment \(PDF\)](#).<sup>7</sup> Such shortages increase the market value of equipment, further incentivising theft.

## 1.3 Impact on victims

The impact of equipment theft on victims can be wide-ranging, including financial costs and the emotional and mental health impact.

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<sup>4</sup> Ironmongery Direct, [Trade Theft Report 2022](#), 11 April 2022

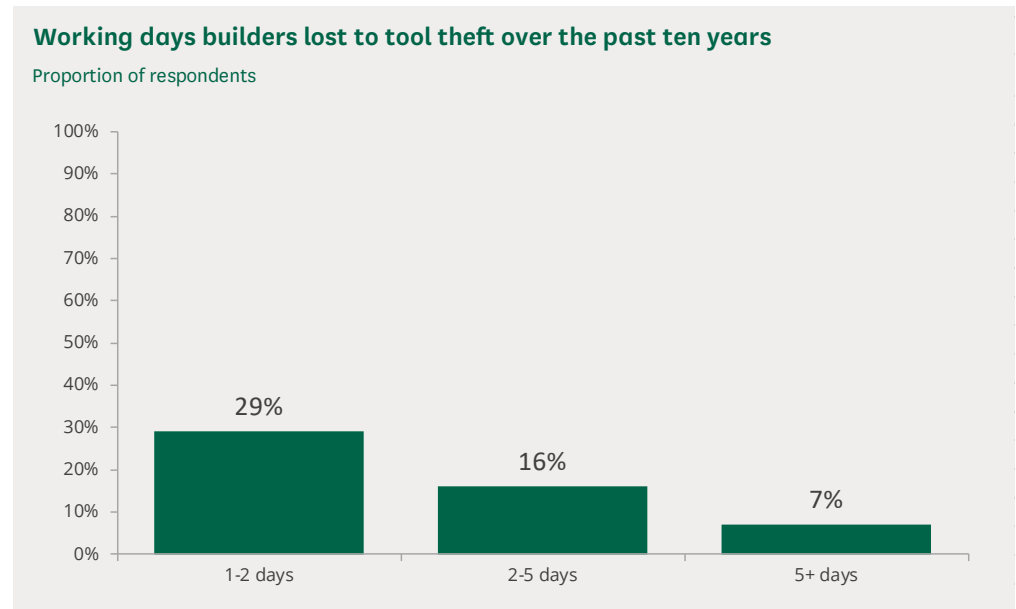
<sup>5</sup> The Construction Index, [Tool theft remains a daily headache](#), 7 July 2021

<sup>6</sup> Direct Line Group, [Six in ten tradespeople have encountered suspected stolen tool sellers](#), 18 May 2021

<sup>7</sup> NFU Mutual, [Ready for the returning threat: Rural Crime Report 2022 \(PDF\)](#), 5 August 2022, p4

## Financial cost

Financially, there is the cost of replacing the stolen equipment as well as the potential loss of business due to delays in sourcing new tools. The FMB estimate that over a 40-year working life, a builder will typically lose £10,000 worth of tools and six working days to tool theft.<sup>8</sup>



The delays to work resulting from equipment theft and replacement can be costly, particularly for agricultural workers. as NFU Mutual's 2022 report explains:

With supply chain issues affecting the sector, farmers suffering the theft of an agricultural vehicle or GPS system can also face severe disruption to essential harvest and cultivation work.<sup>9</sup>

## Mental health concerns

Tool theft can also impact the mental health of victims. The FMB reported that tool theft was causing 15% of builders to suffer from anxiety and one in 10 builders (11%) to suffer from depression.<sup>10</sup> Brian Berry, Chief Executive of the FMB, has spoken about the consequences tool theft can have on mental health:

Decisive action is needed to tackle tool theft. Eight in ten builders report that they have had tools stolen before. This is causing mental health issues amongst builders with reports of depression, anxiety, anger, frustration, stress and even suicidal thoughts.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Federation of Master Builders, [Tool theft affects 8 in 10 builders](#), 24 October 2019

<sup>9</sup> NFU Mutual, [Ready for the returning threat: Rural Crime Report 2022](#) (PDF), 5 August 2022, p5

<sup>10</sup> Federation of Master Builders, [Tool theft affects 8 in 10 builders](#), 24 October 2019

<sup>11</sup> As above



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## 2 How tool theft is currently tackled

### 2.1 Existing legislation

#### Theft Act 1968

The criminal offences of theft and handling stolen goods are set out in the [Theft Act 1968](#). Section 1 of the Act provides that a person is guilty of theft if they “dishonestly appropriate” property belonging to another person “with the intention of permanently depriving the other of it”.<sup>12</sup> Theft is an either-way offence, meaning it can be tried in either the magistrates’ court or (for more serious cases) in the Crown Court. The maximum sentence on conviction in the Crown Court is seven years imprisonment.<sup>13</sup>

Section 22 of the Act sets out the offence of handling stolen goods, which could encompass people involved in trying to resell stolen tools or equipment.<sup>14</sup> The Crown Prosecution Service explains how the offence can be committed:

It can be committed in various ways:

- Receiving stolen goods; or
- Undertaking in their retention, removal or realisation by another person or for the benefit of another person; or
- arranging to do so.

In all cases, the handling must be done otherwise than in the course of theft (or all thieves would also be handlers).

The goods must be proved to be stolen and the defendant must be proved to have known or believed the goods were stolen at the time they handled them.<sup>15</sup>

Handling stolen goods is also an either-way offence and the maximum sentence on conviction in the Crown Court is 14 years imprisonment.

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<sup>12</sup> [s1-6](#), Theft Act 1968

<sup>13</sup> [s7](#), Theft Act 1968

<sup>14</sup> [s22](#), Theft Act 1968

<sup>15</sup> Crown Prosecution Service, [Legal guidance: Theft Act Offences](#), 9 September 2022

## Consumer Rights Act 2015

Consumer rights and the law on title and possession is complex, especially in cases where the goods sold are stolen. In common law the general rule is that “legal title” - or ownership<sup>16</sup> - of an item, can only be passed from one who has the right to do so.<sup>17</sup> If it later turns out that the seller did not have the legal title of the goods in order to pass them on (i.e. did not have the right to do so), the loss falls on the buyer. This is the case even if the buyer is considered “innocent” of having taken the goods. The true owner of the stolen goods remains the legal owner (although there are some common law exceptions). This puts an emphasis on the third-party (the buyer) to check the seller’s title and whether they have the right to pass on the goods.

The [Consumer Rights Act 2015](#) (CRA Act) enshrines this in statute (subject to certain statutory exceptions).

Under section 17 of the CRA Act, the following terms are implied into sale contracts:

- the trader has the right to sell or transfer the goods at the time when ownership of the goods is to be transferred;
- the goods are free from any charge or encumbrance (i.e. burden) not disclosed or known to the consumer before entering into the contract;
- the goods will remain free from any such charge or encumbrance until ownership of them is to be transferred; and
- the consumer will enjoy quiet possession of the goods (except for disturbance that may be caused in relation to any charge or encumbrance owed to the owner of the goods- or other person entitled to the benefit - so long as this is known disclosed or known).

If the seller is in breach of the implied terms, then under the CRA 2015 the consumer is entitled to a full refund from the seller. This applies even if the goods were bought some time ago and the consumer has only just realised they are stolen. The CRA 2015 applies to the sale of second-hand goods except those sold at a public auction. The Act does not apply to business-to-business contracts.

**Note:** “goods” are defined under [section 2\(8\)](#) of the CRA Act as any tangible, moveable items.

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<sup>16</sup> Note: ownership is not necessarily physical

<sup>17</sup> This is reflected in the common law maxim “*nemo dat quod non habet*”: the transferor of goods cannot pass a better title than they themselves possess (known as “the nemo rule”).

## 2.2

# Crime prevention initiatives

## Police and industry guidance

A number of industry stakeholders, including the FMB, have published practical advice for tradespeople to reduce their risk of having tools stolen.<sup>18</sup> [Secured by Design \(SBD\)](#) is an official police security initiative that has published similar tips to prevent tool and van theft.<sup>19</sup> These recommendations include:

1. **Remove tools from van:** thefts from vans are far higher than from properties, so owners are advised to remove tools where possible from vehicles.
2. **Install a tool safe:** to provide an extra level of security for those tools that are left in a vehicle.
3. **Keep valuables out of sight and your van locked:** to deter opportunistic thefts.
4. **Park strategically:** parking in well-lit areas, preferably covered by CCTV can act as a deterrent, as can parking against walls that could prevent doors being opened without moving the vehicle.
5. **Install an alarm:** Lincolnshire Police recommend products that are Thatcham/Secured by Design accredited. However, a small stand-alone PIR shed type alarm with texting facility or personal attack alarm when triggered can be very loud, act as a deterrent and let you know that your vehicle has been entered.
6. **Install new locks:** especially on older vehicles.
7. **Mark tools:** overtly marking tools with a company name, postcode or name, makes them harder to sell on. Consider using a tool register app, such as Tool Watch (outlined below).<sup>20</sup>
8. **Tailor security to each manufacturers' van:** every manufacturer's van has a different weak spot, so it is important to address the most common break-in methods for each owner's model of van.

## Digital solutions

Independent companies have developed apps that allow tradespeople and agricultural workers to record details of their tools and equipment.

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<sup>18</sup> Federation of Master Builders, [How to protect against tool theft](#), 21 November 2017

<sup>19</sup> Secured by Design, [Vans & Tool Theft](#)

<sup>20</sup> Federation of Master Builders, [How to secure your van and prevent tool theft](#), 20 April 2021

### The Tool Register app

One example is uWatch Ltd, based in South Oxfordshire, which launched [The Tool Register](#) app.

If a tool is reported stolen, the detail of the missing item will appear on “Dodgy Gear”, a free search engine for stolen goods. People can use the search engine to check a second-hand item they wish to purchase.

The Tool Register app also alerts other local registered users after a tool has been reported stolen, warning them to keep an eye out for suspicious activity and to ensure their tools are secure.<sup>21</sup>

### Tool Watch

[Tool Watch](#) works to simplify the process of recording tools, proving ownership and reporting thefts to police in real-time. Accredited by SBD, the Tool Watch App allows users to record their tools by uploading forms of ownership and photographs to their profile. This information can then be used by police to recover stolen equipment through the searchable Tool Watch database.<sup>22</sup>

### CESAR Scheme

[The CESAR Scheme \(Construction and Agriculture Equipment Security and Registration scheme\)](#) uses visible and covert markings on plant and agricultural machinery. Using a database of ownership, stolen machinery can be identified and returned more easily to owners. [According to the Agricultural Engineers Association \(AEA\)](#) – an official supporter of the CESAR scheme – the launch of CESAR has contributed to a 60% decline in thefts since 2008.

## 2.3

## Government action

In response to a written question on what steps the Home Office is taking to tackle van theft, the Government outlined several steps it has undertaken to address the issue of stolen equipment. These include the establishment of an expert Stolen Goods Working Group that collaborates with the police and the academic community to tackle the markets for stolen goods. Kit Malthouse (then Minister of State for the Home Office and Ministry of Justice) said:

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<sup>21</sup> Business Innovation Mag, [New tool register app makes stolen tools “too hot to handle”](#), 6 April 2020

<sup>22</sup> Police Professional, [New app to tackle ‘epidemic’ of tool theft](#), 20 January 2020

The group is examining ways to make property more identifiable and traceable and are working with partners to increase enforcement and encourage due diligence checks by second-hand goods traders.<sup>23</sup>

The National Vehicle Crime Working Group, established by the National Police Chiefs' Council (the co-ordinating body for all UK police forces), is also being used to connect the Government, the police and motor manufacturers. The Government has said that this Working Group has created a network of vehicle crime specialists across police forces in England and Wales. Their work also looks at how to reduce thefts of items from vehicles.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> PQ 43584 [on [Vans: Theft](#)], 6 September 2021. Similar answers were given in response to more recent written questions: see PQ 98331 [on [Tools: Theft](#)], 5 January 2022, PQ 108592 [on [Tools: Theft](#)], 20 January 2022

<sup>24</sup> PQ 98331 [on [Tools: Theft](#)], 5 January 2022

## 3 The Bill

### 3.1 The Private Members' Bill ballot

At the start of each parliamentary year, all backbench MPs are invited to enter a ballot for the chance to be selected to introduce a Private Member's Bill on a subject of their choice in that session. The first 20 MPs who are drawn can each bring in a Bill of their choosing. The higher the MP is drawn in the ballot, the more likely they are to get time to debate their Bill.

The ballot for the 2022-23 parliamentary session took place on 19 May 2022. 460 MPs entered the ballot, and Greg Smith came third. This allowed him to introduce a Bill with a guarantee that it would be debated.

On 15 June 2022, Greg Smith presented to Parliament the [Equipment Theft \(Prevention\) Bill](#). The Bill's [Second reading debate took place on 2 December 2022](#) and the [Committee stage occurred on 1 February 2023](#). Report stage is scheduled to take place on 3 March 2023.

### 3.2 Background to the Bill

Greg Smith has previously proposed introducing serial numbers for equipment by way of the [Tool Theft \(Prevention\) Bill](#) 2019-21, a Ten Minute Rule Bill in the House of Commons. Introducing the Bill, Greg Smith said he was seeking to tackle the high levels of tool theft in his constituency and that the suggestion of serial numbers had been raised on a local community Facebook forum. He went on:

I am bringing forward this proposal that online marketplaces should require individuals selling second-hand tools to show, in a searchable format, the serial numbers—the unique identifiers—of all such items. The use of serial numbers would close down ways for people to turn their stolen goods into money, and it would facilitate the ability of victims, the police and insurance companies to track down stolen items.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> [HC Deb 27 April 2021](#) c262

## Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013

Parallels can be drawn between the aims of the Equipment Theft (Prevention) Bill and the [Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013](#), which was brought in with a similar rationale. The 2013 Act was introduced through a Private Member's Bill after an increase in metal theft incidences and sought to introduce a more robust regulatory regime for scrap metal dealers to reduce the opportunities for metal thieves to sell stolen material.

When reviewing the effectiveness of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act, the Home Office was satisfied with the impact the Act had had on metal theft. The report found:

The overwhelming view of those who responded was that the Scrap Metal Dealers Act had improved regulation of the scrap metal industry and, by doing so, had helped to achieve reductions in the level of metal theft.<sup>26</sup>

Stakeholders did note that the broader context of falling global metal prices should also be considered, and that the effectiveness of the Act would be more fully tested as the price and value of metals increased.

## 3.3

## The Bill

### Requirements for sale

**Clause 1** of the Bill would allow the Secretary of State to introduce regulations restricting the sale of "specified equipment" where "specified requirements" are **not** met.

"Specified equipment" would be defined as:

- "mechanically propelled vehicles" that are meant for use somewhere other than on a road, which travel on more than two wheels or on tracks and which meet a certain engine capacity; and
- other equipment (including vehicles) primarily used in agricultural or commercial activities.<sup>27</sup>

The regulations would be able to specify the following requirements:

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<sup>26</sup> Home Office, [Review of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013](#), December 2017, p10

- that the equipment is fitted with a device designed, or adapted, to be fitted for the purposes of preventing the equipment from being driven or otherwise put in motion; and
- that the equipment is marked with a unique identifier, and that there is a visible indication of it having been marked with a unique identifier.

The regulations would not be able to restrict the sale of equipment if the equipment was being sold within a supply chain or if the equipment has only been used for its original purpose.

## Record keeping

**Clause 2** of the Bill would enable the Secretary of State to issue regulations requiring a person selling specified equipment to record certain information. Examples of records that may be required include the contact details of the buyer, specifications of the equipment, any unique identifiers that the equipment has, and the date of sale.

The regulations would also be able to specify when, where and for how long those details should be kept.

The regulations would not be able to impose record keeping requirements on the sale of second-hand equipment and sales within a supply chain.

## Enforcement

Under **clause 3** of the Bill, a person would be committing an offence if they:

- sell equipment without meeting the requirements of any regulations issued under **clause 1**; or
- fail to record information in accordance with any regulations issued under **clause 2**.

Anyone committing the offence would be liable to a fine on summary conviction.

**Clause 3** of the proposed Bill would also amend [paragraph 10 of Schedule 5](#) to the Consumer Rights Act 2015 (CRA 2015) to enable a local weights and measures authority (trading standards services) or a district council to enforce the requirements of the Bill. Schedule 5 to the Act contains the investigatory powers that can be used by consumer law enforcers to ascertain compliance with, and investigate breaches of, consumer law which an enforcer has a duty or power to enforce (primarily those listed in paragraphs 10 of Schedule 5). These investigatory powers (known as the “generic set”) include the power to inspect products and documents and to seize goods and to investigate breaches of consumer law.



## Extent and commencement

The Bill would extend to England and Wales and would come into force 6 months after being passed. The prevention, detection and investigation of crime are devolved matters in Northern Ireland and Scotland.

[The Explanatory Notes \(PDF\)](#) set out how the Bill's provisions would apply to sales between the four constituent parts of the UK:

The United Kingdom Internal Market Act 2020 (UKIM) will apply to the Bill's provisions. The Act seeks to prevent internal trade barriers among the four constituent countries of the UK.

The principle of 'mutual recognition' under Part 1 of UKIM will apply. This means that goods that comply with regulations permitting their sale in the part of the UK from where they originate, may be sold in other parts of the UK without complying with regulations there. The result for the purposes of this Bill is that ATVs sold under contracts concluded in Scotland or Northern Ireland will not require immobilisers or markings (until the governments of those parts of the UK decide otherwise) even if the purchaser is based and will use the ATV in England or Wales.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> [Explanatory Notes \(PDF\)](#). Equipment Theft (Prevention) Bill, pgs 3-4

## 4 Commons stages

On 15 June 2022, Greg Smith presented the [Equipment Theft \(Prevention\) Bill](#).

### 4.1 Second reading

[Second reading of the Bill took place on 2 December 2022](#). Widespread cross-party support was expressed.

In his opening speech, Greg Smith explained that the Bill would enable collaboration and intelligence sharing between industries which would support crime prevention:

Its guiding principle is one that goes right to the heart of the Bill: cross-industry co-operation is crucial for crime prevention, and prevention is fundamentally better than the cure. Just as the vehicles themselves are important to farmers, so intelligence-sharing is essential for tackling theft. That is what the Bill enables.<sup>29</sup>

Ben Everitt (Conservative) expressed his support for the Bill and emphasised the cost that equipment thefts can have on farmers and rural communities. He highlighted the use and theft of ATVs and quadbikes, noting the benefits that could be made by introducing forensic markings and immobilisers:

By preventing the theft and resale of this equipment, which is vital to tradespeople and agricultural businesses, we can deter and reduce theft. Specifically ... by mandating and fitting forensic markings and vehicle engine immobilisers, we will set a new standard for security on vehicles manufactured and sold in the United Kingdom.<sup>30</sup>

Holly Lynch (Labour), Shadow Minister for the Home Office, also supported the Bill, emphasising the benefits it would have for rural communities. She called for the Bill to have wider coverage, particularly regarding tool theft from vans.

... the Bill is a good framework, which will most certainly help farmers and others who have rural business vehicles, but I would like it to go wider to encompass all farm equipment and then to help, defend and support our tradespeople, who are the backbone of our economy and this country. I ask the Minister to look to include those businesses in his plans. This Bill mandates the forensic marking of farm vehicles, which is of equal importance and value to

<sup>29</sup> [HC Deb 2 December 2022](#) c1086

<sup>30</sup> [HC Deb 2 December 2022](#) c1090

tradespeople. Let us look after those who look after our economy and our country.<sup>31</sup>

Tom Randall (Conservative) similarly emphasised the remit of the Bill could go further regarding tradesmen and their tools. For example, he suggested it could:

... require online marketplaces to require individuals selling second-hand tools to show the unique identifiers of such items in a searchable format. That would close down the ways for people to turn their stolen goods into money and facilitate victims, police and insurance companies' tracking down stolen items.<sup>32</sup>

Chris Philp, the Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire confirmed that the Government “fully support” the Bill, and will do all it can to “ensure that it is on the statute book as quickly as possible, and is then implemented in full”.<sup>33</sup>

## 4.2 Public Bill Committee

The Bill was considered by a [Public Bill Committee in a single sitting on 1 February 2023](#). No amendments were tabled for committee stage.

Greg Smith supported calls to extend the measures of the Bill to include more industries and equipment, including theft from vans. He highlighted that there is provision in the Bill to allow such extensions by providing:

... the power for the Home Secretary to extend its provisions through secondary legislation explicitly to other equipment designed or adapted primarily for use in agricultural or commercial activities.<sup>34</sup>

Regarding enforcement, Greg Smith noted that the level of fine given to offenders under the Act would be a level 5 fine, which is unlimited. He highlighted the involvement of stakeholders in the Bill's development, stating:

I do not anticipate non-compliance as manufacturers and trade associations have been involved in the Bill's development from an early stage. We have held many roundtables, including in Parliament.<sup>35</sup>

Holly Lynch again expressed Labour's support for the Bill and her hope that the scope would widen beyond agricultural and construction vehicles:

In conclusion, we very much welcome the opportunity to support the Bill through its passage on to the statute book. We hope that it makes the difference that we would all like to see, and we very much hope that there is a

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<sup>31</sup> [HC Deb 2 December 2022](#) c1097

<sup>32</sup> [HC Deb 2 December 2022](#) c1108

<sup>33</sup> [HC Deb 2 December 2022](#) c1111

<sup>34</sup> [Public Bill Committee](#) 1 February 2023 c3

<sup>35</sup> [Public Bill Committee](#) 1 February 2023 c7

further opportunity to consider and evaluate its impact with regard to what other types of kit it might be appropriate to extend these protections to.<sup>36</sup>

Chris Philp voiced his support for calls to expand the scope of the Bill and explained that this was something the Home Office was exploring:

I have asked Home Office officials to work on developing the statutory instruments to address it as well as doing the work on ATVs. That work is ongoing; they are doing the technical work to look at it at the moment, so I cannot make an absolute commitment that it will be done at the same time, but my starting position is that if we are going to bring forward statutory instruments under the Bill to deal with ATVs, why not do the other tools at the same time?<sup>37</sup>

Regarding the coverage of the Bill, Ian Paisley, Shadow DUP spokesperson for Culture, Media and Sport and for Communities and Local Government, noted his wish for the Bill to extend to Northern Ireland.<sup>38</sup> Greg Smith was supportive of this idea, adding that it is his hope that the Scottish Government and the Executive in Northern Ireland will consider the provisions.<sup>39</sup>

Report stage is scheduled for 3 March 2023.

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<sup>36</sup> [Public Bill Committee](#) 1 February 2023 c9

<sup>37</sup> [Public Bill Committee](#) 1 February 2023 c10

<sup>38</sup> [Public Bill Committee](#) 1 February 2023 c7

<sup>39</sup> [Public Bill Committee](#) 1 February 2023 c11

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