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## Bitcoin Seizure Fuels Lancashire Crime Crackdown

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– Categories: *Crypto*



Lancashire Police will reinvest £500,000 from a seized cryptocurrency wallet into local crime prevention programs, following a landmark fraud case that saw digital assets used and recovered through the *Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA)*. This marks the force's first successful use of a crypto wallet freezing order, an emerging tool in modern policing.

The case originated from a 2017 fraud complaint, where offenders based in Blackpool, Fleetwood, and Blackburn converted stolen funds into Bitcoin. After an extensive

investigation, the individuals were prosecuted and sentenced. As the proceedings unfolded, the value of the seized Bitcoin grew substantially, exceeding the amount stolen.

For the first time, Lancashire Police invoked POCA to freeze the offenders' crypto wallet. Once the victim was fully compensated, a surplus of roughly £1 million remained due to Bitcoin's rising value. A judge approved a forfeiture order, directing half the surplus, £500,000, to the Home Office, and the other half to Lancashire Police.

## New Funding to Support Community Safety

The police force will allocate its share to the *Prevention and Problem-Solving Innovation Fund*, which supports projects designed to reduce crime, improve public safety, and strengthen law enforcement capability. Past initiatives funded through this program have included anti-scam technology, community patrol tools, and surveillance drones.

Detective Sergeant David Wainwright of the *Economic Crime Unit (ECU)* called the ruling “a great result for the people of Lancashire,” and emphasized that it could be the first of many such cases using digital asset seizure laws.

“This is a new way to turn criminal wealth into something that directly benefits communities,” Wainwright said.

## A Changing Approach to Digital Crime

The case highlights the growing importance of cryptocurrency in financial crime investigations and enforcement. Police forces across the United Kingdom are increasingly dealing with digital assets, requiring updated procedures for seizure, valuation, and reinvestment.

Crypto's volatility poses unique challenges for law enforcement. Authorities must act quickly to obtain court orders before asset values swing dramatically. Legal experts are urging clearer national guidelines for managing digital property in criminal cases.

This case could set a model for other regional police forces seeking to combat digital fraud and convert seized crypto into tools that benefit the public.