

Wales Reports UK's Largest Rise in Car Thefts

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— Categories: Crime



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Vehicle thefts across the U.K. have shown mixed trends over the past year, with Wales emerging as a particular hotspot for rising incidents. According to a new analysis, all four Welsh police forces were among the top 10 in the U.K. for year-on-year increases in car theft between 2023 and 2024.

The Dyfed-Powys Police area recorded the most significant surge, with a 52% increase in stolen vehicles, the largest in the country. Gwent followed closely behind, experiencing a 20% rise. These figures contribute to broader concerns, as both forces have also seen

some of the biggest long-term increases in car thefts since 2019. Gwent's five-year increase stands at 37%, while Dyfed-Powys has experienced a dramatic 428% rise during the same period, the steepest in the U.K.

The data comes from a study by the financial firm Go. Compare, which analysed Home Office crime statistics obtained through a Freedom of Information request. The study tracked five years of car theft reports to identify regions with the highest growth in incidents.

North Wales and South Wales also reported notable year-on-year increases, 14% and 9% respectively. Despite these rises, some Welsh regions still report lower overall theft rates than other parts of the U.K. In Dyfed-Powys, there was one car theft for every 1,666 registered vehicles, ranking it as the second-lowest in the U.K. North Wales followed closely, with one theft per 1,094 vehicles, the fourth-lowest ratio.

South Wales and Gwent, however, ranked mid-table nationally. South Wales recorded one theft for every 370 vehicles, while Gwent's ratio stood at one per 326 vehicles.

Other UK regions also saw significant rises. Police Scotland reported a 14% increase, while Wiltshire (12%), Bedfordshire (11%), and Sussex (10%) also made the top 10 for growth in vehicle thefts. The findings have prompted renewed calls for better vehicle security, particularly in regions with steep increases.

In contrast, several areas across England reported declines. The City of London saw the most substantial drop at 39%, though it remains one of the U.K.'s leading theft hotspots, with one theft per 91 vehicles. Other forces reporting significant declines include Cleveland (25%), Greater Manchester (19%), Northumbria (18%), and Merseyside (18%).

Overall, vehicle thefts across the U.K. declined by 3% in the past year. However, the total remains 8% higher than in 2019, suggesting that the problem remains persistent in several regions.

Steve Ramsey, motoring editor at Go. Compare, noted the continued challenges despite the national drop. "While vehicle thefts in the U.K. fell last year, there were still more incidents than five years ago, and certain areas continue to experience worrying increases," he said. Ramsey advised motorists in high-risk areas to consider additional anti-theft measures, including alarms, steering locks, and avoiding vulnerable parking spots.

He also reminded drivers to ensure adequate insurance coverage. “Third-party only policies don’t include theft protection, and crime rates can affect premiums. It’s worth comparing your options to keep costs down while staying protected.”