Pattern or Trend

There has been a recent increase in the number of high powered, expensive vehicles stolen within the whole of Staffordshire. These vehicles are mostly keyless entry vehicles.

Focused Crime Prevention advice

Advice to prevent thefts from keyless vehicles

We are issuing crime prevention advice to advise motorists how to protect their keyless vehicles.

What is signal jamming?

Thieves use a gadget to prevent your key fob sending the command to lock your car and it remains unlocked. Whilst this tool will not allow them to steal your car it will allow them to root through your valuables.

How to avoid: Make sure the indicators flash when you press the lock button and listen for the doors locking.

What is signal relaying?

When the correct key fob is close by, the fob recognises the signal and transmits its own code, instructing the vehicle to unlock the doors and to allow the ignition to work on the car.

Thieves use wireless transmitters to capture its radio transmission. This is relayed to another device. It allows the thief to open and start your car in the same way.

How to avoid: Use car key signal blocker cases/sleeves, they cost less than £10, or an aluminium tin at home. Find a safe place for your keys at home and check to ensure they are out of range.

What is key programming?

Every car has a standard diagnostic port fitted. Computer hackers have developed devices that plug into the port, boot up a vehicle's software and then program a blank key fob. In keyless cars this can be used to start the engine as well as unlock the doors.

How to avoid: Fit a lock to your diagnostic port and use additional security such as a steering wheel lock.

Number plate thefts

Officers are also encouraging residents to report number plate thefts. They are stolen to be used in other offences such as:

- Speeding
- Illegal parking
- Not paying congestion charges
- Driving away from a petrol forecourt without paying
- Not paying for parking tickets or speeding fines
- 'Disguising' a stolen vehicle.

Vehicles with stolen number plates have also been used in more serious crimes such as burglary, kidnap and robbery.

How to avoid: Use Anti-theft Number Plate Bolts, they cost less than £10