

## PRESS RELEASE

# 'STOP THE PLAGUE OF TOOL THEFT ACROSS THE UK' Westminster Rally

Press Info – 03<sup>rd</sup> February 2025

### Trades United to Rally in London Against Tool Theft Epidemic

Trades United is **once again** organising a van rally in Westminster (Parliament Square) to bring attention to the widespread issue of tool theft and the resale of stolen goods. Starting from Brent Cross, tradespeople from across the UK will converge in London to demand stricter enforcement of existing laws for theft - in particular tool theft.

#### [03/02/2025 TRAILER](#)

Tradesmen and women will captivate London with a second van rally, urging the government to address the inadequate enforcement of laws that jeopardise thousands of livelihoods across the UK. The event is set for Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025, beginning at 11:00 AM, arriving to Parliament Square at 11:45-12:00 where tradespeople and their supporters will mobilise to Westminster to sound the alarm on the escalating tool theft and van break-in crisis.

In Westminster, the trades will gather for a "go slow" convoy demonstration, driving around the area for 2 hours as they did before on 03<sup>rd</sup> June 2024. The goal is to highlight the need for stringent measures to deter thieves and the sale of stolen tools. Due to the timing of the last rally **no response was received from the government**, however it has gained a lot of traction within the industry and more and more people are now in support of the cause.

The last rally on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024, not only drew attention to the growing issues it also allowed for Trades United and Shoaib Awan to form relationships with companies such as Selecta DNA and the Metropolitan police all of whom have since been working together to tackle the issue with mass tool marking events which will help the police in returning any stolen items to the rightful owner and contribute to convicting the offenders.

Shoaib Awan also launched a petition (#659019) in April 2024 for the Government at the time to address this issue with campaign group Trades United, with the announcement of dissolution of Parliament (30th May 2024) this was automatically closed. The petition reached over 46,000 signatures. However, he still urges everyone to support the cause in a bid to get their voices heard and issues addressed by MP's and their parties.

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/659019>

Now it is time for the Government to step up and address this issue and increase funding to organisations such as Metropolitan Police and other forces across the country and enforce

existing laws with stricter punishment for those caught stealing tools or re-selling the stolen goods.

The Theft Act 1986, which addresses the handling of stolen goods, is currently underenforced. The Act stipulates:

1. A person handles stolen goods if, knowing or believing them to be stolen, they dishonestly receive, retain, remove, dispose of, or assist in the realisation of the goods for another's benefit.
2. A person found guilty of handling stolen goods can face up to fourteen years imprisonment upon conviction.

Despite these provisions, enforcement is lacking, due to insufficient police funding from the Government and their inability to staff the police forces adequately.

Trades United seeks to hold the government accountable and ensure the laws designed to protect tradespeople and the widespread community are effectively enforced.

**Founder of campaign group Trades United Shoab Awan, said:**

*" On the 3rd February 2025 I will bring tradespeople across the country together once again at Parliament square, for the new Government to see the distress these thieves and car boot sales have caused to their livelihoods. Tool theft numbers are rising year on year and not enough from the Government has been done to protect the trades. A crime reference number is not acceptable. We don't want policies that don't work we need strict enforcement and a crackdown operation with **IMMEDIATE EFFECT**.*

*It's distressing how widespread tool theft has become, impacting not only livelihoods but also mental well-being and family stability. The lack of effective intervention from law enforcement only exacerbates the problem. Businesses suffer not only from the loss of tools but also from the subsequent financial burdens such as increased insurance costs and repairs. It's essential for communities, policymakers, and law enforcement agencies to work together to address this epidemic and provide support for those affected".*

**Experiences of tool theft from people taking part in the rally:**

**Danny Madden (Madden Builders):**

*"1986 my dad's van was broken into and all the tools stolen, fast forward to 2024 when my own van was broken into on a driveway all tools stolen and van emptied. This is clearly a problem that hasn't gone away and it literally shuts down our business overnight. Six times my van has been targeted over the years, I am in constant fear of going out each day to earn a living that I am at risk each time I leave the van. Something has to be done about this now. This needs to stop now we need the support of the police and most importantly the Government."*

**Karm Warshawaya - Build Works:**

*"I'm here because a year ago my van and all my tools were stolen in broad daylight. To say the impact of this was paralysing both emotionally physically and financially is an understatement. Within 2 hours everything we built over 10 years was gone. I was simply told let your insurance deal with it.*

*Tools are stolen every 17 minutes in the UK. Stolen Tool trafficking is incredibly lucrative for petty criminals, more needs to be done to protect tradespeople.*

*Car boots and cash converters are the easiest no trail places to sell stolen tools. Help us to end this and make sure no tradespeople go through what we did".*

**Shane (Helix Plumbing and Heating):**

*"I had my tools stolen as an apprentice and I had saved really hard to buy those tools that were helping me make a career for myself. In one night all of that got taken away from and I had to start all over again with no help and no prosecution for the thieves that were to blame.*

*Things need to change. If we all woke up tomorrow and every trades persons tools were stolen, within a couple of days this country would come to a stop. We need change!"*

**Joe (Second City Screed Ltd):**

*"I am lucky enough not to have had tools stolen however I have friends that have and people I know.*

*The biggest effect of this happening is people's mental health suffering and in turn causing the tradies to break down and in a lot of circumstances leading to suicide. Check the statistics of suicide in construction and how since tool theft has increased so has the suicide rate".*

**EZ Builds Official:**

*"My van has been broken into twice now. The first time they got away with about £1,000.00 of tools and the second time which was only a few months ago they wiped me clean of all of my tools totalling around £3,500.00.*

*It caused me a great deal of stress and anxiety as I didn't know how I was going to get back on my feet and provide for my family.*

*Now it is a constant fear when going to jobs and having to pick and choose what I carry with me thus making a job a lot more stressful than it already is. Something has to be done now."*

**The Roofing Outlaw:**

*"Tool theft has affected me many times and contributed to a lot of lost work. I have had to stop jobs due to the theft and not having the tools to complete the job. I cannot feed my 10 children with a crime reference number, I have never claimed benefits in my life, I am a hard worker and a proud member of the English society. However my patience is wearing thin with the lack of law enforcement – how many times do I let them steal my money?"*

**Steve –**

*"My dads van was stolen in 2024 along with thousands of pounds of tools (locked in a tool safe) all we got from the police was a crime reference number. I had to drive to the next county to see the police because our local police station in Harlow doesn't deal with this type of crime".*

**RDW Electrical –**

*“2023 my van was broken into at 11am outside Lords Cricket Ground, I was given a police reference number with no police attendance. I was subsequently told that there was sufficient CCTV in the area but not enough time to look into it. £4,900.00 of tools were stolen including my suitcase with personal belongings. The insurance paid out £1,900.00 after being told that my tools would have decreased in value by 20% per year since purchase. This made me feel like I was robbed twice.*

*Police need to take tool theft more seriously and treat it like it was a personal mugging because that is how it felt.*

*Its time for the trades to come together and fight against these gangs and thugs. We need the Government to stand with us and not allow this to continue.*

**Nick Shaw –**

*“I personally haven’t had my van broken into but many of my friends have. It has got to the point now with so many vans being broken into that I am scared to even leave it at the supermarket car park to do a quick shop, how has it come to this?”*

**Gary Quinn –**

*“As a self-employed trades person it is difficult enough to find work to provide for your families and pay the ever increasing bills,etc. Without tool thieves making life even more difficult.*

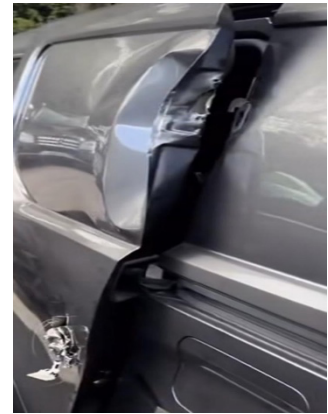
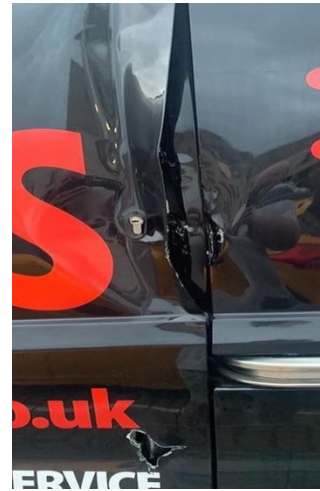
*We are all aware that this is not going to stop overnight but we need to make a move forward with this and keep making progress towards ending tool theft.”*

**Paint Warrior –**

*“My van has been done a few times now, the first time cost me several clients and caused my insurance to rise. As you can imagine how frustrating this is being penalised twice for what happens to our vans. The police didn’t show up, I only got to speak with an operator on the phone. I do feel like if I owned a shop the police would be there if it was broken into. We are treated differently.”*

**Warren:**

*“I have had my van done seven times now, never at home always at the jobs. Three times my van was sign written and 4 times there were no signs on the van, but I guess the pipe tubes give it away. The damages to the van cost more than the stolen tools themselves and time lost with the van off of the road for repairs”.*



**Luke Thorn**  
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Following on from my post yesterday a lovely local has cleaned up the images of this man who stole a large amount of tools from my van yesterday. Video in comments, hopefully the clearer images help identify him. I don't have any hope for my tools but hopefully this can stop it happening to someone else.





## Ends

Contacts for further comment

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