

National Data Sharing News Review

Issue: 11
June 2008

a user newsletter from Hicom Business Solutions



Welcome to **National Data Sharing News Review**; a newsletter for the users of Hicom's Crime Reduction solutions.

Our newsletters will keep you informed of all the latest product developments and innovations as well as any relevant stories, and we would be delighted to receive any feedback from our readers.

If you would like to find out more please visit our website at www.hicom.co.uk or email us at info@hicom.co.uk

"Business Crime Reduction Partnerships are an essential feature of local crime strategies".

**Mike Schuck, Chief Executive
Action Against Business Crime**



NBIS Excellence Awards

Hicom Business Solutions launched the NBIS Excellence awards in March, in recognition of those partnerships who have contributed significantly to the crime data held on NBIS.

Mike Schuck, Chief Executive of Action Against Business Crime (AABC) said, "We now have over 200 business crime reduction partnerships managing business crime reduction in towns and cities across the country. These organisations are an essential feature of local crime strategies and work closely with retailers, police and other local agencies".

The contribution of NBIS users such as Bolton & Blackpool has had a significant impact on reducing business crime throughout the UK; tracking offenders nationally and collating their activities enabling a more complete case to be presented to police from intelligence led information. Businesses and retailers benefit from costs savings that result from a reduction in theft and loss, and town and shopping centre managers are able to promote a safer shopping environment with a reduction in social issues such as drug addiction that are sometimes funded by theft.

Locations who have recently adopted NBIS include; Blackpool, Bristol, Manchester, Wakefield, Brighton & Hove, Leeds and the London Boroughs of Havering and Camden, allowing them to manage, analyse and share crime data in real-time on known offenders.



Blackpool BID: Most Promising Newcomer

Blackpool Business Improvement District (BID) has been awarded the NBIS Excellence Award as the Most Promising Newcomer to adopt NBIS within the last 12 months.

The award recognises the contribution that Blackpool is making with regard to the effective use of the National Business Information System (NBIS) for the management of business crime and the sharing of data with other partnerships.

Connected to NBIS in July 2007 and currently recording on average over 250 incidents per month, Blackpool BID's proactive approach to data capture using town rangers, has played a major part in providing data that the police would not have otherwise had access to; 80% of data collated.

To date, Blackpool BID has recorded over 1,500 incidents, over 500 offenders and linked 10 offenders to 5 other schemes from over 140 locations.



Bolton: Outstanding Performance



Bolton Business Crime Reduction Partnership has been awarded the NBIS Excellence Award for the Outstanding Performance that the partnership has displayed in its consistent ability to capture data, the management of that data and its application with regard to crime reduction.

Bolton was the first scheme to adopt NBIS and has contributed significantly to the development and user requirements of the system.

The award recognises the effective use of the National Business Information System (NBIS) in establishing a highly successful methodology and approach by Bolton to the dissemination of data to partnership members and other agencies.

On average over 85% of Bolton's incidents would have remained outside the view of police but through an excellent relationship with the business sector, this information is now available and is contributing to the reduction of business crime, with data captured from over 18,000 incidents, 3,000 offenders, and 23 linked offenders from over 340 locations with 22 ASBOs issued as a result.

National Staff Dismissal Register (NSDR)

action against  business crime
by business - for business



With staff theft and fraud in the retail industry resulting in an average annual loss of £497 million, Action Against Business Crime (AABC) have championed an initiative to reduce losses attributed to staff dishonesty.

AABC has been working in association with Hicom Business Solutions, to develop a national register of staff who have been dismissed for dishonesty. The register has been developed to hold details of individuals who have been dismissed or have left employment whilst under investigation for acts of dishonesty toward the company including theft of money or merchandise, falsification or forgery of documents and causing damage to company property. This information is shared with other members of the register who are able to access the national system to search for details of an applicant, ensuring both cost saving through reduction in losses, and a more efficient recruitment process.

The NSDR involves the collection and sharing of personal information and therefore falls under the regulation of the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). Regular communication with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has ensured that the processes of the NSDR comply strictly with the principals laid down in the DPA which establishes the framework for the sharing of personal information.

Retail provides many opportunities to dishonest employees. Investigation of dishonesty is time consuming and costly and will be of limited deterrence if future employers are unable to properly identify potentially dishonest staff to ensure that they are not able to obtain employment by evading internal vetting processes.

For dishonest employees who have not been convicted or cautioned for their dishonesty there is currently no central location where further checks can be made concerning an applicant's previous employment history. The current system of employment references is too easily circumvented by dishonest applicants and can result in previously dismissed staff being employed again by another retailer without knowledge of any past conduct.

The NSDR provides a secure web-based portal using a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL), which protects data access and encrypts log-in to allow members to access data as part of their staff recruitment process. The application and database are held on separate servers with firewall and Internet Protocol Security (IPSEC) separating application and data for further security.

Mike Schuck, chief executive of Action Against Business Crime said, 'We are very pleased indeed to have launched the NSDR and look to it providing an increasingly valuable service to help retailers reduce losses by dishonest staff. With the increasing sophistication of internal dishonesty, we need to ensure the industry has the most effective tools at its disposal to help reduce losses.'

NSDR: Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Will accused individuals know that they are being added to the register and have the opportunity to defend themselves?

A: Yes. *The Terms and Conditions require that an individual is informed that the reason for dismissal will be added to the NSDR, and what will be included on this record. If an individual complains that the information held is inaccurate then the individual's opinion of this inaccuracy must be recorded. This opinion will be visible to prospective employers who view the NSDR record.*

If an individual wishes to correct an inaccuracy on the NSDR he has rights under the Data Protection Act to request this. If an individual is found to be falsely accused, then their record will be removed.

Q: Can an employee be added on the basis of historic events or allegations?

A: No, data cannot be added to the NSDR retrospectively. *An employee must be informed during the dismissal process if they are included on NSDR.*

Q: Could someone be on the NSDR for stealing a low value item?

A: Yes. *If the offence is grounds for dismissal then the employer can include a person on the NSDR. Even if a small item is stolen, it is still theft. The decision to include an individual who has been dismissed for dishonesty on the NSDR is ultimately a decision for the member organisation concerned.*

Q: How will NSDR prevent an unscrupulous employer falsely accusing an employee of misconduct and adding them to the database simply because they bear a grudge?

A: There are safeguards in place to prevent such misuse of the system. *Following consultation with the Information Commissioner's Office, Terms and Conditions were established that require an individual who has been dismissed to be informed that:*

- 1. Their details and the reason for dismissal will be entered and held on the NSDR.*
- 2. They may appeal the decision in writing to appropriate persons who must be independent of the decision making process.*

The dismissed individual has the opportunity to include their view of the dismissal as part of the record. The statutory rights of an individual are not affected by an employer's membership of the NSDR, for example a person who feels that they have been dismissed unfairly has a right of appeal to an industrial tribunal.

Q: Will having a record on NSDR permanently affect employment potential?

A: Records will be reviewed every 12 months and most records will be held on the database for a maximum of 3 years. *The Codes of Practice require that companies do not use an entry on the register as the sole reason to deny a job applicant employment.*

Q: Will NSDR be available to every business in the UK?

A: No. *Only those organisations who can demonstrate that they can adhere to the Codes of Practice under the Data Protection Act as well as the Terms and Conditions of the membership and follow a robust and fair disciplinary process can become members of the NSDR.*

Feedback?

We hope you found the newsletter of interest.

If you have any comments on the newsletter or would like to suggest a topic for inclusion in the next newsletter, please contact Hicom on:

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Thank you all for your continued support.