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## **IAATI UK Welcomes Head of National Rural Crime Unit in Patron Role**

### **NEWS SUMMARY:**

- *Head of the National Rural Crime Unit, Superintendent Andy Huddleston, has become the latest patron of the UK branch of the International Association of Auto Theft Investigators*
- *Superintendent Huddleston will provide senior strategic guidance, and support stronger collaboration between law enforcement and industry*

Superintendent Andy Huddleston, Head of the National Rural Crime Unit, has become the latest patron of the [UK branch of the International Association of Auto Theft Investigators \(IAATI\)](#). With a distinguished policing career and recent recognition through the King's Police Medal in the 2026 New Year Honours, Huddleston brings extensive expertise to the Association's work to investigate and prevent vehicle theft across the country.

As IAATI UK patron, Huddleston will provide senior strategic guidance, support stronger collaboration between law enforcement and industry, and help advance national efforts to investigate organised vehicle crime. His role includes promoting best practice, encouraging effective intelligence sharing, and strengthening the organisation's voice on issues affecting investigators across the UK.

Huddleston says: "I welcome the opportunity to support IAATI UK and its work to strengthen the response to vehicle and machinery theft. The challenges faced by investigators and industry partners continue to evolve, and I look forward to helping drive practical solutions that protect communities and support those working to prevent and investigate these crimes."

Beginning his policing career with Durham Constabulary in 1995, Huddleston has worked across a wide array of roles, ranging from neighbourhood policing and 24/7 response to VIP armed protection, surveillance and counter-terrorist operations.

He joined Northumbria Police on promotion to Superintendent in 2017, where he spent three years as Head of Response and Neighbourhood Policing for the Northern Command, leading initiatives tackling rural crime. These efforts culminated in Huddleston establishing the National Rural Crime Unit in 2023, which provides national coordination, specialist support and international representation for rural policy.

In the past three years, he has secured £1.6 million in external funding to support the Unit's operations, fostered a greater collaborative approach between farmers and policymakers, and trained more than 700 officers to identify thieves targeting machinery in rural areas.

Huddleston was also a key advocate behind the [Equipment Theft Prevention Act 2023](#), which aims to introduce groundbreaking legislation mandating forensic marking and immobilisation for construction and agricultural machinery in the UK.

Laura Moran, IAATI UK's President and Managing Director of [TVL Group](#), adds: "Andy's appointment strengthens the depth of expertise supporting IAATI UK. His long-standing work in rural crime and his understanding of the challenges faced across policing and industry will help us continue to develop effective approaches to tackling vehicle and machinery theft."

## **IAATI United Kingdom Branch**

IAATI UK (The United Kingdom Branch of IAATI), formed in 2001, brings together members from law enforcement agencies and appropriate industry partners to tackle organised vehicle crime. No single organisation could hope to confront vehicle crime in its entirety and defeat it. A partnership approach is needed. As an association, its principal method of delivering this remains through facilitating networking and the one-to-one communication channels, along with delivering high quality global training courses delivered by experienced subject matter experts.

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