

Welcome to the Tackling Retail Crime Together Newsletter



A message from ACC Alex Goss

NPCC Lead for Retail Crime

“As we move beyond the first year of the Tackling Retail Crime Together Strategy, it is important to recognise the significant progress that has already been made. The TRCT strategy is delivering real results, with strong progress across all strategic strands and delivering results across workstreams, including improvements in intelligence sharing, offender management, digital reporting, violence reduction and national collaboration between policing, retailers and business representatives.

Recent developments demonstrate the momentum that is building nationally. While these achievements are encouraging, I want to be clear that delivering the ambitions set out within the TRCT Strategy cannot be achieved by the small number of key stakeholders already involved.

The strategy was deliberately built as a shared commitment between Policing, Retailers, Business Crime Reduction Partnerships, Business Improvement Districts, Home Office and wider industry partners. Success depends on every stakeholder moving beyond supporting the concept and actively contributing to delivery.

Over recent months, many organisations have attended meetings, contributed ideas and expressed support for the strategy. Whilst that engagement is welcome, we now need to see a stronger collective effort to translate discussion into action. The challenges facing the retail sector will only be addressed if all partners take ownership of the parts they are best placed to influence and deliver.

While examples of excellent partnership working continue to emerge across the country, we still regularly see practices that run contrary to the approaches already agreed and promoted through TRCT, including inconsistent reporting, delays in submitting evidence, limited information sharing and missed opportunities to identify prolific offenders. These issues reduce investigative opportunities and restrict the collective impact we can achieve. The challenge now is for all partners to adopt and champion the right way of working by reporting incidents promptly, sharing quality evidence, participating in intelligence processes, supporting local partnership activity and making full use of available tools, technology and guidance.

Retail crime remains one of the most significant challenges facing our communities, our businesses and our frontline retail workers. The responsibility for tackling it sits with all of us. The TRCT Strategy provides a framework for action, but it is the commitment of its partners that will determine its success.

I would encourage every organisation involved in this work to reflect on what further action they can take, what best practice they can share, and how they can contribute to collective delivery over the coming months. Together we have made strong progress. Together we can achieve even more.”



College of Policing funded work around direct digital reporting

The College of Policing, working with the NPCC, is evaluating direct reporting tools as part of the wider retail crime portfolio. Forces that have previously expressed an interest in supporting this work are being invited to take part in the evaluation.

The study will explore the productivity and operational benefits of these tools, including their impact on demand reduction. The College of Policing are keen to hear from forces using these platforms, whether or not direct reporting functionality is in place, to compare different approaches and identify what works best. The evaluation will help establish consistent measures of success, showcase good practice, and build an evidence base to support future decision-making across policing.



DPC Collaboration with the MPS and Retail Digital Reporting Platform

The latest results demonstrate the significant value that digital crime reporting and intelligence platforms can deliver through closer collaboration between policing and the retail sector. Retailers using the platform have achieved a 29.4% positive outcome rate, almost double the Met-wide average of 14.8%. By enabling businesses to submit CCTV footage, witness statements and evidential material directly to police, the platform supports faster identification of prolific offenders and more efficient investigative processes.

The initial rollout has produced strong operational outcomes, with 564 shoplifting offences solved from 1,920 reported incidents during the first six months. Following this success, the platform is being expanded across a further eight London boroughs, increasing its reach and providing additional opportunities to reduce retail crime through improved information sharing and case management. Building on these proven results, the Digital Public Contact (DPC) programme is using the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) as an early adopter force for direct digital reporting capability. This DPC-led approach will allow the MPS to test, refine and evaluate the technology at scale, generating operational learning and evidence of effectiveness before wider consideration across policing.

By positioning the MPS as an early adopter, the DPC aims to demonstrate how direct digital reporting can improve public contact, increase efficiency, enhance investigative outcomes and support broader policing reform. The approach will provide a robust evidence base to inform future national implementation, ensuring that any wider rollout is grounded in proven operational benefits and practical learning.



Latest positive crime stats

Shoplifting offences in England and Wales fell four per cent in the year to March 2026, following a period of increases, according to new Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures released in July.

Police recorded 507,086 shoplifting offences during the year, down four per cent from 530,324 the previous year. The ONS said recent rises in shoplifting had likely reflected both an increase in offending and improved reporting as Police encourage retailers to report all incidents and submit evidence such as CCTV footage.

Sharing Best Practice Delivers Faster Justice for Retail Crime Victims

Merseyside Police has successfully implemented Operation Dale across the force, demonstrating how adopting proven approaches from other forces can deliver tangible benefits for victims, businesses, and the wider criminal justice system.

The initiative, which focuses on a Prosecution Without Interview (PWI) process for suitable shop theft offences, was introduced after reviewing successful models already in place elsewhere in UK policing. It highlights the value of forces working collaboratively, sharing evidence-based practice and adopting innovative approaches that have already been shown to improve outcomes.

The process enables investigators to build cases using digital evidence where there is already sufficient material to support a charging decision, removing unnecessary investigative steps and reducing the need to interview suspects when there is overwhelming evidence. This allows officers to spend more time focusing on preventing crime and targeting prolific offenders, while delivering swifter justice for victims.

Following a successful pilot in Merseyside in February 2026, Operation Dale has now been rolled out force-wide. Early results have shown a reduction of seven hours in the average time from custody arrival to charge, alongside consistently strong rates of early guilty pleas. Efficiencies generated through the model are also helping to reduce costs and make better use of public funds.

The approach builds on successful practices already established elsewhere. Hampshire Constabulary has operated a similar model for more than a decade and identified that interviews had no bearing on court outcomes in 97% of cases reviewed. Northamptonshire Police reported a 97% guilty plea rate at first appearance, while Warwickshire Police achieved a 95% guilty plea rate through its "Straight Charge" process during trial.

The success of Operation Dale demonstrates the importance of forces learning from one another and adopting proven methods rather than developing solutions in isolation. By embracing established best practice from across policing, Merseyside Police has been able to accelerate implementation, improve efficiency and deliver benefits to victims and businesses more quickly.



OPAL update

Police ORC data highlights that violence is more likely to occur in a less organised offence.

Police data shows where offenders used either verbal aggression (Low Risk) or were reported to have physical violence (Medium Risk). The highest percentage of both types of violent incidents is seen in those offences considered not to be organised (64%); this is almost certain to be because organised offenders use a variety of other methods to facilitate their offending while avoiding bringing attention to themselves during the offence.

ITEMS TARGETED		POLICE DATA			INDUSTRY DATA		
		Highly Organised	Organised	Semi-Organised	Highly Organised	Organised	Semi-Organised
	1	food	food	food	food	food	food
	2	alcohol	alcohol	alcohol	alcohol	alcohol	alcohol
	3	electrical items	meat	meat	meat	meat	meat
	4	cash	cleaning products	cleaning products	cleaning products	cleaning products	cleaning products
	5	meat	electrical items	electrical items	cosmetics	cosmetics	cosmetics

The above table shows the most targeted 5 items for the Police and industry data for Jan-Jun 2026 broken down by organisation. In the Police data, Highly Organised offences are the only group showing differences in the top 5 items targeted. Highly Organised offences targeted electrical items more than any other organisation category and was the only organisation category to feature cash in the top 5. Meat appears lower in this group than any other, but further examination of the data showed that while a higher value of meat items were stolen Tobacco and vaping items closely follows meat in this category.

Violence Risk

In the industry data there are no differences in the top 5 items targeted, however, the levels at which the items are targeted do differ. In the Highly Organised group food and alcohol combined make up 41% of all items stolen, however this rises to 50% and 53% for Organised and Semi-Organised offences, respectively, suggesting that these items are targeted more by prolific offenders than sophisticated organised groups. Within the food category, Highly Organised offenders target higher value items. In the food category they target more coffee and chocolate and in the alcohol category, more spirits, compared to Organised and Semi-Organised offenders.

A stylized phoenix logo on the left side of the page. The phoenix is composed of flowing, flame-like shapes in shades of blue, orange, and white. Its head is turned to the right. Below the phoenix, a white silhouette of the London skyline is visible, including the London Eye, the Shard, the Tower Bridge, and St Paul's Cathedral. The background is a dark blue gradient with a checkered pattern in the top right and bottom left corners.

Project Phoenix

Project Phoenix is a new partnership between Nike, Opal and the Safer Business Network (SBN), launched in July 2026 as part of the Tackling Retail Crime Together Strategy to strengthen the response to organised retail crime. The project focuses on OCGs and high-harm offenders impacting London and surrounding areas, aiming to further identify connections across national offending networks. Recognising that 68% of Opal's national organised retail crime investigations have involved London, the project combines Opal's national policing capabilities with SBN's local intelligence networks by embedding a dedicated, police-vetted SBN Intelligence Analyst within the Opal team.

Its aim is to improve intelligence sharing, identify high-harm offenders and organised crime groups earlier, connect offences across retailers, boroughs and force boundaries, and support coordinated prevention, safeguarding, disruption and enforcement activity. Project Phoenix focuses on developing high-quality intelligence through both retailer referrals and proactive intelligence gathering. By linking information from retailers, Business Crime Reduction Partnerships, police and security partners, the initiative seeks to build a clearer picture of organised retail crime impacting London, creating disruptions not only locally, but across the national threat landscape.

SaBA wheels in motion for November

Taking place from 9–15 November 2026, the National Business Crime Centre's Safer Business Action Week will unite with the Association of Convenience Stores, Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers and Retail Trust, aligning their respective ShopKind, Respect for Shopworkers Week and Let's Respect Retail campaigns with activity taking place across the country.

Throughout Safer Business Action Week, police and partners across the country will be encouraged to deliver visible and targeted activity focused on local business crime priorities. This can include business engagement, crime prevention, intelligence sharing, targeted enforcement and action against prolific offenders, alongside work to address anti-social behaviour and improve safety for employees and customers.

ACC Alex Goss - "As the NPCC Retail Crime Portfolio Lead, I am proud to lead our fifth year of national Safer Business Action Week, commencing on Monday 9th November 2026. The week provides an opportunity for police forces across the country to demonstrate their commitment to supporting businesses and recognising the vital role they play in our communities.

"The introduction of the Crime and Policing Act 2026 legislation creates a specific offence of assaulting a retail worker - and sends a clear message that such behaviour will not be tolerated and strengthens protections for those working on the frontline. Retailers have invested heavily in security, technology and staff protection measures, and policing continues to work closely with the sector to prevent crime, bring offenders to justice and support victims.

"The role policing plays in tackling business crime is critical to maintaining confidence across the business community. Safer Business Action Week highlights the positive work taking place nationwide and reinforces our shared commitment to making businesses, high streets and communities safer for everyone".





SaBA continued.....

I'm a BCRP/BID – what can I do to?

Some ideas include:

- Setting your Top 5 offenders,
- Create an e-briefing for publication on your intel system,
- Hold a short intel briefing meeting or even a high visibility street briefing (more on this below)
- Conduct as many member visits as possible,
- Encourage new signs ups to your intel system,
- Loan out trial radios to businesses who are not already members
- Perform radio checks and radio training to encourage confident use of the radio,
- Promote ShopKind using the resources available: [Shopkind Webpage \(nbcc.police.uk\)](https://nbcc.police.uk)
- Be out and about all day to support your members (and spot those offenders!)
- And remember to share your photos and results!

BCRPs should be involved in SaBA week, and BCRPs should now start planning their activity.

Please see the link to the TRCT website: [Targeting High Harm Places: A Busy and Productive Few Weeks - Tackling Retail Crime Together](#)

High Harm Places meetings as good practice.

[Crime Prevention Series-Theft from Shops-Dec 2024.pdf](#)

[Violence against Staff in the retail sector: The triggers and how to prevent it](#)



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TOGETHER**



Key Dates

15th October

Employer Supported Policing (ESP) National Day of Action

This is the second year that the NPCC has coordinated this national event. The day is designed to recognise and highlight the significant contribution made by Special Constables, particularly those whose volunteering is supported by their employers.

Planned activity on the day is expected to include:

- Executing warrants and arresting outstanding suspects.
- High-visibility patrols in high streets, shopping centres and retail parks.
- **Plain-clothes patrols targeting retail crime and shoplifting.**
- **Spread over the whole day and evening**
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The date has been specifically chosen as it marks the 195th anniversary of the Special Constabulary receiving Royal Assent.

For more information, contact craig.batham7980@southyorkshire.police.uk

26th October to Monday 23rd November

NPCC - Spotlight on Town Centre Policing

To showcase the amazing work that is taking place in Town Centres/ retail areas across the country. This will take the form of a media campaign on our Social Media channels. This will be an NPCC led project but will be supported by the Home Office, the lead for retail crime, Safer Business Network & National Business Crime Centre.

Contact NPCC Insp Val Charles for more information: Valerie.Charles@npcc.police.uk

9th November – 15th November

Safer Business Action Week (SaBA)

This is a national week of action focused on reducing retail and business crime through enforcement, prevention and partnership working.

For more information and how to get involved, contact Sophie Jordan: info@nabcp.co.uk or NBCC Sgt Rachael Rowlands [Rachael. Rowlands @cityoflondon.police.uk](mailto:Rachael.Rowlands@cityoflondon.police.uk)



How You Can Support the Work

We are asking partners to support the next phase of delivery by:

- contributing data and insight to shape the Fusion Cell
- participating in working groups and consultations
- supporting consistent reporting and information-sharing practices
- providing feedback on early TRCT products and tools
- championing the strategy within your organisation

Your engagement is essential to building a truly national, joined-up approach.



www.nbcc.gov.uk **Tackling Retail Crime Together | National Business Crime Centre**



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