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RETAIL CRIME TASKFORCE

SUMMER 2026 - RETAILER BULLETIN

**Retail
Crime**
TASKFORCE





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We welcome any feedback you may have. For any non-urgent queries or to provide feedback on this bulletin, please contact us at:

SCDRetailCrimeTaskforce@scotland.police.uk

Welcome Message



Jordon Low

Detective Chief Inspector | Retail Crime Taskforce

Welcome to the June edition of your Retailer Summer Bulletin. I have recently taken over the role from DCI Jackie Knight and am delighted to be involved in this area of Policing having previously been involved in various National acquisitive crime roles.

My intention is to continue the outstanding work that has been undertaken in the last 12 months to tackle retail crime, improve retailer and public confidence in our policing response to retail crime, and drive forward the number of arrests and detections in this area.

This is the 6th publication from the Retail Crime Taskforce and continues our commitment to you the retail sector in keeping you updated with the work taking place across Scotland in tackling Retail Crime in partnership with the retail industry.

In this bulletin we highlight some key updates from the previous months; positive performance indicators across the North, East and West, detail our forthcoming year 1 report, reflect on initial online reporting and some positive industry survey results showing rising confidence in reporting and increasing engagement with the sector.

We will shortly move to publishing these Retailer bulletins every quarter going forward, this will allow the team to provide deeper insights into the work of the RCTF to accompany our regular ongoing updates across our social media feeds and our in-house retailer forum platforms.

I would encourage you to actively engage in the retailer forums run by the team, they are for all sizes of retailers and are detailed in this issue of the bulletin. These help shape our work and provide that opportunity for your input and engagement as we move forward into year 2.

Confidence to Report Retail Crime

In our last issue we updated you on the SGF Annual Report and in particular, the improvements seen in the area of confidence to report to Police. In the 2025/26 Report retailers reported they were unlikely or very unlikely to report Theft by Shoplifting to Police had fallen to just 10.9% (from 48.2% in the previous year).

Alongside this, a Retailer Survey by the RCTF in February 2026 found that 77.3% of retailers responding felt more confident in reporting Retail Crime to Police.

These are encouraging steps after just over one year of the Taskforce, and we believe the positive engagement we have had with retailers have contributed heavily to increased confidence in the policing response.

In addition to the work of the Taskforce under our 4Ps Strategy of Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare, we have listened to retailers and have also sought to improve the reporting processes for Theft by Shoplifting. We updated you on the introduction of a new online reporting form via the Police Scotland Contact Us webpage in our last bulletin. For those who missed this, retailers may now report theft by shoplifting directly to police at the following link:

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us/report-shoplifting>

Or by scanning the QR code



The new online reporting tool was tested by a small number of retailers in December 2025, and following positive feedback it was gradually made available to more retailers from January 2026, until late March 2026, when the online form became available to all retailers. Between 01 January 2026 and 31 May 2026, a total of 8,582 reports of shoplifting were made to Police Scotland via Online Reporting, accounting for a total of 33.9% of all shoplifting crimes recorded.

These are promising signs, making the reporting process more accessible and bringing efficiencies for both the retail community and police. Alongside, increased use of the online reporting process, we have seen a renewed increase in the overall number of theft by shoplifting offences reported to Police. At the end of 2025/26 (31/03/26), the number of recorded theft by shoplifting crimes had increased by 19%. At the 31 May 2026, year to date figures for 2026/27 show an increase of 26.8%, equating to around 183 crimes per day (up from 146 crimes per day last year).

From retailer surveys and our engagement with stakeholders, it seems likely that the increases in reporting do not necessarily indicate a new surge in shoplifting crimes, it is more likely that increased confidence and ease of reporting, mean that Police data is beginning to align more closely with retailer data (which has indicated underreporting for a sustained period).

We are monitoring these increases closely and continuing to engage with the retail community to ensure that police resources are used as effectively as possible, while maintaining a focus on the highest harm offenders across the following “3Vs”:



Volume – those offenders who are prolific in the amount of retail crime they commit



Value – those offenders who cause the most significant financial harm to retailers



Violence – those offenders who use threats and violence towards retail staff

We will bring you more updates on this as work progresses on online reporting, including continuing work with certified third-party platforms which are already being used by retailers to report retail crimes and intelligence internally.

In the interim, we encourage all retailers to continue to report Retail Crime when it occurs, in particular where the “3Vs” are evident, and in every case where unacceptable threats or violence are used towards retail staff.



Spotlight on RCTF Funded Initiatives in Year One

In Year One of the Taskforce, a proportion of the £3 Million Scottish Government Funding was made available to all 13 Local Policing Divisions across Police Scotland, allowing them to bid in for funding to undertake initiatives to tackle Retail Crime locally under the 4Ps Strategy.

We now take a look at how this funding was spent across the East, North and West Regions of Police Scotland and the results that have been achieved, along with a Spotlight Case Study for each region.

East Region

The East Region of Scotland covers Forth Valley, Edinburgh, Lothian and Scottish Borders, and Fife Policing Divisions.

Summary of Funding

- 30 Funding Bids, totalling over £360,000
- Range of activities supported, including; additional enforcement/patrols, small independent retailer alarms, shop radio schemes, days of action and retail crime reduction initiatives, additional CCTV, employability, partnership funding.
- Third Sector support/diversion supported – VOW (Edinburgh), Supporting Opportunities for Living (SOL) (Lothian and Scottish Borders), SideStep (Action for Children) (Edinburgh) and Rebuilding Futures Alliance (Edinburgh).

Summary Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

- Arrests: 157
- TSL Charges: 478
- Retail Worker Offences Charges: 157
- Intelligence Reports: 223
- Retailer Engagements: 241



Case Study

Supporting Opportunities for Living (SOL) – Lothian and Scottish Borders

Supporting Opportunities for Life (SOL) is a collaborative and innovative initiative delivered in partnership between Police Scotland and the charity Aid & Abet. The project supports young people aged 10–25 years across West Lothian to make meaningful, positive changes in their lives.

Many young people face significant barriers relating to education, employment, mental health, and community engagement. SOL addresses these challenges through tailored guidance, compassionate support, and practical interventions, helping participants move away from criminality and towards safer, more productive futures.

SOL has developed a strong partnership with “The Centre” in Livingston, a major retail shopping centre that has experienced ongoing challenges with youth disorder and anti-social behaviour.

Through a restorative justice approach, young people involved in incidents attend meetings with their parent or carer, alongside retail staff, to understand the real impact of their actions.

SOL enhances this process by providing a tailored, trauma-informed intervention. Peer mentors use their lived experience to communicate consequences in a relatable and impactful way, helping young people reflect and make different choices.

Importantly, SOL’s involvement extends beyond the initial intervention. It marks the beginning of ongoing support, guiding participants away from offending behaviour and towards positive opportunities.

The Centre has also provided SOL with access to unused retail space, now known as ‘The Hub’. This space has become a focal point for community collaboration, hosting a range of local groups and activities.



North Region

The North Region of Scotland covers Tayside, North East, and Highland and Islands Policing Divisions.

Summary of Funding

- 7 Funding Bids, totalling over £170,000
- Range of activities supported, including; additional enforcement/patrols, days of action and retail crime reduction initiatives, youth related Anti-Social Behaviour and Theft by Shoplifting initiatives.

Summary Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

- Arrests: 98
- TSL Charges: 307
- Retail Worker Offences Charges: 22
- Intelligence Reports: 106
- Retailer Engagements: 386

Case Study – Operation Lambie – Highland and Islands

The taskforce provided funding to Highland and Islands Division to undertake Operation Lambie – an operation involving high visibility patrols at key times and locations to improve retailer confidence. The Operation was centred mainly on Inverness after other Highland hotspots were tackled. There was a drop in TSL offences from 763 (2024/25) to 559 (2025/26) for the period of Operation Lambie. 119 retailer engagements and 60 intelligence reports during the operations.

Inverness BID and Police Scotland's Inverness Local Area Command (alongside Local authority, businesses and third sector) also operated Street Scene to provide activities for young people in Inverness city centre on Friday afternoons.





West Region

The West Region of Scotland covers Greater Glasgow, Renfrewshire & Inverclyde, Argyll & West Dumbartonshire, Lanarkshire, Ayrshire and Dumfries & Galloway Policing Divisions.

Summary of Funding

- 36 Funding Bids, totalling over £540,000
- Range of activities supported, including; additional enforcement/patrols, small independent retailer support, shop radio schemes, days of action and retail crime reduction initiatives.
- Third Sector support/diversion supported – Youth Engagement Pathway (Dumfries & Galloway), Lanarkshire Community Murals, and Glasgow Guardians.

Summary Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

- Arrests: 315
- TSL Charges: 1130
- Retail Worker Offences Charges: 98
- Intelligence Reports: 561
- Retailer Engagements: 1,691



Case Study – ShopSecure (Silverburn Shopping Centre) – Greater Glasgow

Identifying the opportunity to support the reduction of Retail Crime and enhance the protection of retail workers, Police Sergeant Jordan Kane, created the “ShopSecure” training package, which he and his team delivered to retailers within Silverburn Shopping Centre, Glasgow.

In August 2025, the Taskforce provided funding support to ShopSecure and Sergeant Kane utilised this to undertake proactive activity and further enhance the collaborative work already in place.

Between September 2025 and February 2026, Sergeant Kane coordinated and provided oversight to officers utilising overtime hours on their days off, focusing on Retail Crime prevention within Silverburn.

This resulted in:

- 20 charges/reports
- 6 arrests
- 26 stop searches
- 52 intelligence reports
- 7 repeat offenders disrupted
- 6 Organised Crime Groups Disrupted
- 59 retailers provided crime prevention advice
- 32 RCTF posters distributed
- 3 School inputs delivered (diversionary)
- 6 ShopSecure training inputs delivered



The Security Director at Silverburn, commented,

“This enhanced presence clearly demonstrated the strong collaborative partnership between Silverburn and Police Scotland and has been greatly valued by our onsite teams, retailers, clients and guests. The additional visibility of officers provided reassurance to customers and staff alike. Numerous members of the public and retailers approached our teams to specifically comment on the positive police presence and the increased sense of safety it created during what has been Silverburn’s busiest trading year to date.”

Retail Crime Taskforce

Small and Independent Retailer Webinar



Are you an independent or small retailer?

Your voice is vital in the fight against retail crime.

The RCTF will be holding their next quarterly Webinar for smaller and independent retailers via Microsoft Teams. The aim of the webinar is to give smaller and independent retailers access to the knowledge and experience of the Taskforce officers, which will include Retail Crime Prevention advice, Dealing with Confrontation and updates on work being carried out by the RCTF.

If you are a smaller or independent retailer, the webinar will also allow you to ask questions or highlight ongoing Retail Crime issues. As we go on, there will be guest speakers from partner agencies, who will provide further useful information on services available to the retail sector.

This webinar is scheduled for

11am on Wednesday 19th of August 2026,

If you would like to receive an invite, please email

SCDRetailCrimeTaskForcePrevent@Scotland.police.uk

to be added to the circulation list.

Due to the expected number of attendees, if there are any questions you wish answered, please add these to the same email, the RCTF will look to answer as many of these as possible during the Webinar.



Your Taskforce in Action

Cross Border Retail Crime Success

Officers in the Edinburgh RCTF recently worked with the Midlothian Problem-Solving Team in a joint operation to tackle a group who were targeting various supermarkets. The group were carrying out bulk thefts of alcohol at a number of premises across Edinburgh, Midlothian and the Borders.

The group covered a wide geographical area, and it was clear that a collaborative approach would be required to ensure that all evidence was gathered and officers would have the best opportunity to apprehend the suspects. Edinburgh and Midlothian officers were in regular dialogue with retailers to maximise investigative opportunities, share information and cover as many of the premises that were being targeted.

Initially the group comprised of three males who targeted alcohol stealing hundreds of pounds of stock at a time. Morrisons and Sainsburys supermarkets were two of the businesses targeted and the Taskforce appreciated the partnership working and speed at which CCTV and statements were provided, allowing reports to be submitted to the Court, outlining the extent of the offending meaning arrest warrants could be swiftly issued by the Courts.

The males were identified by officers, and one was quickly traced and arrested. At his subsequent court appearance, he pled guilty and was given a 6-month custodial sentence. The two other members of the group continued to commit theft and protection of retail worker offences. Midlothian and Edinburgh RCTF officers continued to work together, which culminated in a period of intense and specific enquires at stores resulting in both males being arrested over the same weekend.

In total over 80 charges were libelled and 5 separate police reports were submitted for this group fully encompassing the extent of their offending. Court proceedings are still ongoing for two of the group.

Due to the volume of incidents and wide area covered, the partnership and collaborative approach between retailers and officers in different police divisions resulted in all evidential and investigative opportunities being maximised, the group being arrested and charged with all offences and reported to the Court.

Police Inspector Emma Wright of the Retail Crime Taskforce said “This is a great example of partnership working between retailers, the RCTF and divisional teams. This group caused significant issues to retailers at a number of stores and all officers involved worked tirelessly to gather evidence, arrest members of the group and charge them with theft by shoplifting, assault and protection of retail worker offences. Police Scotland take these incidents seriously and we will continue to bring those responsible to justice”.

As part of the Prevent strand of the RCTF approach to offending, one of the offenders has engaged with a Police Scotland outreach programme aimed at rehabilitating offenders. The scheme is aimed at helping offenders to get back into the working environment, reducing the likelihood of them reoffending and causing further issues for retailers again in the future.

Targeting Retail Premises Trading in Stolen Goods

The Edinburgh RCTF have also been carrying out enquires into the reset of property stolen from retail premises. Two search warrants were executed at different businesses, and a significant amount of property was seized by police. Enquires are ongoing into one of these incidents and the other enquiry has resulted in two males being arrested and the matter is being reported to the Court.

Anti-Social Behaviour Order Success

The Edinburgh Taskforce also secured a 3-year Post Conviction Anti-Social Behaviour Order in respect of a male who had been targeting businesses in the Northwest of Edinburgh. PC Jemma Steele from Edinburgh’s RCTF, led the enquiry into this male which resulted in multiple convictions for theft by shoplifting, assault of retail workers, assault and robbery. The male was given a 14-month custodial sentence and will be subject of the Anti-Social Behaviour Order from his release which prohibits him from entering two stores where he committed the majority of his offending. Staff at the stores were delighted with this outcome and the RCTF will continue to target those who commit theft and ensure that all options are presented to the court.



Your Taskforce Results

Retail Crime Taskforce – Year 1 Update.

Look out for the Retail Crime Taskforce Year 1 report coming later in July. This will detail all the work undertaken by the RCTF, Local Policing Divisions and our Retail industry partners in tackling retail crime last year.

In the interim, please see the below round up of our KPI results for Year 1 (1 April 2025 - 31 March 2026):

5,760 Shoplifting Charges/Detections

1,542 Intelligence Logs Submitted

648 Retail Worker Offence Charges

1,330 Arrests Made

3,151 Suspects Identified by RCTF

41 Organised Crime Groups Identified

268 Electronic Briefings Disseminated

128 Disruptions Against OCGs

In total the RCTF recorded over **16,044** results across all of our KPI recorded activities in its first year of operation.

RCTF Updates – Safer Communities Scotland Guest Blog

Retail crime isn't just about stolen goods. We know that behind every incident of theft by shoplifting are real consequences for retail workers, businesses and communities.

In this guest blog for Safer Communities Scotland, Kevin Chase, the National Architectural Liaison Officer for the RCTF Prevent and Protect Team, shares his perspective on the scale of the issue, its impact across Scotland and the work under way to address it.

Read part one of the series - <https://orlo.uk/osVQd>



Follow Safer Communities Scotland or find Part Two of Kevin's Blog in a forthcoming issue of the Retailer Bulletin.

 **Police Scotland** 5d · 🌐

Our [#RetailCrimeTaskforce](#) has been in operation for 1 year and in that time, has supported over 1,300 arrests for retail crime offences.

In addition, the unit's four-strand approach to prevent, pursue, protect, and prepare has resulted in over 6,400 charges for retail crime, with the detection rate having risen to just under 51%, compared with 49% the previous year.

Back in January, the Scottish Government announced an additional £9m in funding to tackle retail crime, meaning the Taskforce will continue to operate until 2029.

Read more about the efforts made to address retail crime in 2025, as well as the Taskforce's plans for 2026, via the link in our comments [🔗](#) [📄](#)

[#NotAVictimlessCrime](#)



Retail Crime affects businesses, their staff

Watch this SPACE

Our Taskforce has made a good initial impact on retail crime, however, there is a significant amount of work still to be done. Expect updates on the following in coming editions of this Bulletin:

- RCTF work with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) – we are working in collaboration with COPFS to tackle Retail Crime. We are focussing work on how we effectively deal with the highest harm offenders and the tools available to us. We hope to run a feature on our progress in a future issue.
- Further updates on expansion of the Direct Reporting of Retail Crime in relation to our work to develop reporting via third party suppliers already used by retailers to record retail crime internally.
- Work with Community Justice Scotland to signpost retail offenders to appropriate community support services and tackle the root causes of Retail Crime.
- A new partnership between Victim Support Services and the Retail Trust to better support Retail Workers who are victims of crime.

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