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# **RETAIL CRIME TASKFORCE**

**SEPTEMBER 2025 - RETAILER BULLETIN**



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## Contact Us

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](mailto:SCDRetailCrimeTaskforce@scotland.police.uk)**

# Welcome Message

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PI Emma Wright

## **Emma Wright**

Police Inspector | Retail Crime Taskforce

Welcome to the second edition of our Retailer Bulletin. As we approach six months of the Retail Crime Taskforce (RCTF) and three months for me in post, it is timely to reflect on some of the great progress which has already been made by the team.

I am please to report that all posts in our core team have been filled, with the last vacancy taken up with the arrival of our National Architectural Liaison Officer (NALO), Kevin Chase. Kevin has been quickly set to work, as the Protect and Prevent Team have made some exciting developments to finalise presentations for retailers on Crime

Prevention and Conflict Resolution; the production of posters and a leaflet for retailers; along with scoping of the education and diversion landscape for adult and youth retail crime offenders.

There have been developments for Operation Dynos, including arrests in July and September of adults who are involved in exploitation of young people, who are being coerced to steal large quantities of alcohol to order. The Dynos team have also had success in diverting a number of those exploited youngsters away from offending.

The Edinburgh RCTF have continued their high levels of Pursue activity, along with their partnership working under the ShopWatch radios initiative and the Vow Project diversionary scheme, going from strength to strength.

Finally, our Intelligence Team have been hard at work, building the intelligence picture on a number of organised retail crime groups and identifying high harm offenders. Intelligence and packages for enforcement action have been shared with local policing colleagues, leading to a number of good news stories.

None of the above would have been possible without the enthusiastic support of a number of retailers and stakeholders, both in targeting high harm offenders and working to make the retail environment more hostile to offenders. Many have also become involved in our monthly Joint Retailer Forum and have supported the circulation of this bulletin. I would like to extend my thanks and look forward to continuing this work over the remaining part of this financial year and hopefully beyond.

# Operation Dynos

## Tackling Exploitation of Young People to Commit Retail Crime



Operation Dynos is an intelligence-led initiative targeting organized crime groups that exploit vulnerable young people to commit large-scale retail theft.

Detective Inspector Paul McDougall, who leads Operation Dynos, said: “Retail crime is not victimless and in fact, what we’ve seen are some of the most vulnerable young people in our communities being actively recruited into the theft and resale of goods such as alcohol from stores in the region by organised criminals for their financial gain.

“We are committed to tackling retail crime, while at the same time safeguarding young people from harm and coercion into criminal behaviour.

“Operation Dynos will continue to gather evidence and utilise all resources at our disposal to bring these individuals to justice.

“This will include working closely with our colleagues across the Retail Crime Taskforce who are co-ordinating activity to target those committing organised retail crime across Scotland. The Taskforce are also working alongside retailers to collectively strengthen the protection against retail crime across stores and key stakeholders to develop education and diversion options to help vulnerable young people make different choices.”

Two significant arrests have been made:

- July 2025: A 22-year-old man was arrested and charged.
- September 2025: A 52-year-old man was arrested and charged.

Both arrests relate to the criminals' practice of coercing youths into stealing high-value goods, particularly alcohol, from stores across the west of Scotland. The stolen items are then resold—an offence known as 'reset'—to fund further criminal activity.

### Next Steps and National Guidance

Future operational activity will focus on developing intelligence to identify and disrupt other adult facilitators and those involved in 'reset' offences.

To aid officers across Scotland, the Op Dynos team will produce a guidance document. This document will detail the tactical approach to both enforcement and diversion used in the operation, offering a blueprint for other divisions that are beginning to see the same modus operandi (MO) in their areas.





# Spotlight on Greater Glasgow Division Expanding Our RCTF Footprint

Whilst Operation Dynos has been making inroads to tackling the exploitation of young people in the retail crime space, the City Centre Community Policing Team and the Safer Communities Partnerships Team have been focussing on a wide range of activities to tackle Retail Crime across the Greater Glasgow area.



On 26th August the City Centre Community Policing Team worked with Retailers Against Crime (RAC) to deliver a Day of Action. This resulted in:

- 7 arrests, 4 of which were for shoplifting
- 12 stop searches conducted
- Numerous intelligence logs submitted
- 15 proactive visits to retail premises
- 3 crime reports raised for Protection of Workers offences
- 1 crime report raised for another matter
- 1 warning issued for noise
- 2 missing persons traced and returned home

In addition to the above day of action, the Safer Communities Partnerships Team have been busy pushing retail crime prevention messaging via their social media channels, producing some great posts which we are looking to build upon for a festive retail crime social media toolkit. The Partnerships Team are also using RCTF funding to provide support to independent retailers with crime prevention information and equipment, such as blind spot mirrors and storeroom door alarms.

Greater Glasgow Division have made excellent use of RCTF funding bids to develop a number of other initiatives, days of action and expand CCTV coverage in the city. Over the coming months there will also be an extension of RCTF funded posts, which will see PS Andy Muir leading four dedicated officers to focus on Retail Crime. The team already have exciting plans and anticipate being joined by BBC film crews for a further RAC Day of Action in November.



## Direct Reporting Update

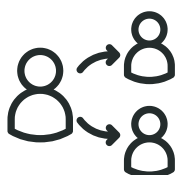
We're pleased to announce that the Proof of Concept evaluation of the SentrySIS Direct Crime Reporting system in 'P' Division is now complete. The results from the trial have been very positive, demonstrating that the system creates significant time savings for both retailers and Police Scotland. For context, Direct Crime Reporting is a process that enables retailers to submit details and evidence of shoplifting incidents directly to police through a digital system, reducing the need for an officer to attend in person for every case.

Work will now be progressed to understand how Direct Retail Crime Reporting can be rolled out on a national scale.



## Joint Retailer Forum Established

The new Joint Retailer Forum is now formally established, and we have held our initial meetings. This forum brings Police Scotland together with retail representatives to share intelligence, discuss challenges, and collaboratively develop strategies to combat retail crime. We are keen to ensure wide representation, and invite loss prevention and security managers from larger retail organisations to get involved. If you are interested in joining, please contact the Retail Crime Taskforce.



## Retail Watch: Information Sharing Scheme

We are excited to announce the RCTF are working with Neighbourhood Watch to further develop their Retail Watch Scheme. This is a partnership scheme designed to share timely intelligence and crime prevention advice. The scheme will be used to circulate alerts on prolific offenders, notify members of emerging crime trends, and provide targeted security advice. Our bulletins and any important updates will also be shared via Retail Watch. More details on how the RCTF will be working with this scheme will be included in future bulletins.

# Retail Workers Act Offences

## Four Years On

August 2025 saw the Protection of Workers Act hit the four-year milestone. The act provides protection for retail workers via the creation of specific offences of:

- Serious Assault of a Retail Worker
- Common Assault of a Retail Worker
- Threatening and Abusive Behaviour towards a Retail Worker

The Taskforce collaborated with the Scottish Grocers Federation, who put out a media campaign to highlight the four year anniversary and cast a spotlight on these offences. Police Scotland Management Information shows:

(\*Data from 01/04/2025 to 19/08/2025)



### Serious Assault of a Retail Worker

These are the most severe attacks. There have been 7 serious assaults so far this year. This is 3 more than at the same time last year. The good news is that we have identified a suspect in every single case (100% solved).



### Common Assault of a Retail Worker

There have been 1,238 common assaults so far this year, an increase of 78 from last year. This means on average, 9 retail workers are assaulted every single day. We are currently solving just over 6 out of every 10 of these cases.



### Threatening and Abusive Behaviour towards a Retail Worker

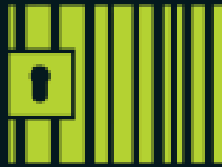
We've recorded 1,430 incidents this year, which is 107 more than last year and an average of 10 offences each day. A suspect is identified in just under 6 out of every 10 reports.

Inspector Emma Wright, lead for Police Scotland's Retail Crime Taskforce said,

"Retail crime is not a victimless offence and can often result in the harassment, intimidation or even assault of shopworkers. Let me be clear, this is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

"It has been four years since the Protection of Workers Act came into effect and this legislation helps us secure stronger criminal justice outcomes for those who carry out these offences on our retail workers.

"The Retail Crime Taskforce are working closely with retailers and partners to reduce retail crime, including offences of abuse and violence against retail workers. We have also launched a fresh resource for retailers to display, which should give their staff reassurance that police will take such offences seriously and that offenders will be prosecuted. I encourage retailers and their staff to report every incident of abuse or violence towards their staff."



# RETAIL WORKERS

**You do not go to work to be threatened or assaulted.**

It is not acceptable. That's why in Scotland, you are protected by law.

It is a specific offence to:

**ASSAULT** a retail worker • **THREATEN** a retail worker • **ABUSE** a retail worker  
Offenders will be prosecuted. Abuse is not part of the job. Report all incidents.

If a crime is in progress or there is an immediate threat, **call 999**.  
To report an incident after it has happened, **call 101**.  
You can also visit **[www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us](http://www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us)**





# Your taskforce in action

## Pursuing offenders

### Case Study 1: Vehicle Stop Halts North Scotland Theft Spree



**The Target:** A criminal was responsible for a series of high-value thefts, targeting multiple stores of a national retail chain in the north of Scotland.

**RCTF Action:** Our intelligence-led investigation identified a vehicle linked to the crime scenes, which led us to a suspect.

**The Result:** Roads policing teams located and stopped the vehicle. The suspect was arrested and found to be in possession of more stolen property.

### Case Study 2: Organised Crime 'Reset' Hub Dismantled



**The Target:** An organised crime group was profiting from the large-scale resale ('reset') of stolen retail goods.

**RCTF Action:** Intelligence was developed which showed associates were delivering large quantities of stolen property to the main suspect's home.

**The Result:** Search warrants were executed on two properties, recovering approximately £4500 of retail goods (set out on display as if for re-sale), and a quantity of cash. Enquiries are continuing in relation to the recovered property.

### Case Study 3: Mobile Shoplifting Team Apprehended



**The Target:** A team of shoplifters was using a specific vehicle to commit numerous thefts across two different policing divisions.

**RCTF Action:** We identified the vehicle through intelligence, located it, and observed the occupants as they entered another large retail store.

**The Result:** Two individuals were arrested in possession of stolen goods worth £260 and foil-lined bags used to defeat security systems. A third suspect who fled the scene has since been positively identified.



**These case studies are a small snapshot of the significant results the Retail Crime Taskforce has delivered over the last two months.**

Information and Intelligence that you share helps us build a national picture of offending. Details on suspicious activity, vehicle registrations, or emerging patterns allow our Taskforce to connect incidents across the country and identify prolific offenders. Many of the successes detailed on this page are a direct result of partner information, so please continue to report incidents to help us target those causing the most harm.



# Think you're **ANONYMOUS?**

We're sharing information. Connecting the dots.  
**We're catching retail criminals.**

Retailers and police now share intelligence to identify repeat offenders and organised groups.

Every piece of evidence is now connected through a national intelligence network, linking incidents and identifying offenders.



# Your Taskforce Results

## Wider Results



We have been working hard to collate data on the results of RCTF-initiated activity. While some data is still being finalised, the figures below are a conservative estimate of our achievements so far. The positive impact the Retail Crime Taskforce is making is already obvious from this initial data.

### Headline Achievements (to August 2025)

Here is a snapshot of our key performance indicators. These conservative estimates show the significant progress being made in tackling retail crime across the country.

**352** Shoplifting Charges/Detections  
**157** Retail Worker Offence Charges  
**325** Suspects Identified by RCTF  
**148** Electronic Briefings Disseminated

**68** Intelligence Logs Submitted  
**65** Arrests Made  
**27** Organised Crime Groups Identified  
**35** Disruptions Against OCGs

(\*data from Edinburgh RCTF April-June still to be finalised and data resulting from bid funded activity by Divisions is yet to be included)

### Retailer Feedback

The feedback from our retail partners has been overwhelmingly positive. They are highly complementary of the early successes of the Taskforce approach.

"Crime against retailers is a scourge on communities across Scotland. Thefts from shops are a key factor behind rising levels of abuse and threats towards store workers. The financial cost pushes up prices for shoppers and undermines the health of our high streets.

"The creation of Police Scotland's Retail Crime Taskforce has been well received by the industry and the early results are encouraging. Our members report improved police response times, the apprehension of persistent offenders, and the return of stolen goods.

If we are to truly turn the tide on retail crime it's crucial this greater prioritisation and focus is maintained, which is why SRC is seeking sustained funding for the taskforce from Scottish Government." - **David Lonsdale, Director, Scottish Retail Consortium**



# New Crime Prevention and Conflict Resolution Training

To better support your staff, our dedicated officers, Stevie and Bruce, are now actively delivering new Crime Prevention and Conflict Resolution training packages directly to retailers. We are also finalising a "Train the Trainer" package, which will empower officers to deliver this vital training to businesses in their own areas, ensuring wider access for everyone.



# Supporting Materials for Your Stores

We have developed a range of new resources to help you protect your staff and premises. These materials are designed to be displayed in staff areas and public spaces. They include:

- **The RCTF Crime Prevention Poster:** A visual deterrent to would-be offenders (see page 10).
- **The RCTF Retail Crime Prevention Leaflet:** A guide offering practical advice and tips for your team (see below)
- **Retail Workers Act Poster:** Explaining the offences of the Retail Workers Act (see page 8)

### Protecting Yourself

How to Handle Confrontations

Shoplifters could respond aggressively when challenged.

Dealing with aggressive behaviour is tough. Your safety is always the number one priority. If you ever feel threatened, step away and find help immediately. Use the S.A.F.E. method to stay in control.

S

**Step Back and Stay Safe**  
Take a step back to give yourself space. Ask them to do the same if needed. Keep your body language open and non-threatening. Avoid crossing your arms or pointing. Make sure you have a clear path to exit. Don't let yourself be cornered.

A

**Assess the Situation**  
Take a deep breath. This helps you think clearly. Look for signs of aggression: clenched fists, a raised voice, pacing, or abrupt movements.

F

**Find Your Voice**  
How you say it is more important than what you say. Speak calmly and clearly, in a lower tone than they are using. This is a powerful tool. Use phrases that show you're listening: "I understand you're frustrated" or "I can see why you're upset." Make eye contact to show you are taking them seriously.

E

**Exit**  
You do not have to tolerate abuse. It is not part of the job. If you feel threatened, remove yourself from the situation. Walk away to a secure staff room or office. Alert your manager or security team immediately. Use a panic button if available.

**Protecting your store from RETAIL CRIME**

We're sharing information.  
Connecting the dots.  
We're catching retail criminals.

We welcome any feedback you may have.  
For any non-urgent queries or to request digital copies of this leaflet, please contact us at:  
SCD@retailcrime.scotland.police.uk

#NotAVictimlessCrime #RetailCrimeTaskforce

### Preventing Theft

Your Store: Make it Secure

**Your Presence: Be Seen and Heard**  
**Greet Everyone:** A simple "hello" lets people know you are aware of them and their actions in the store.  
**Be Visible:** Walk the aisles regularly. Your visible presence gives the impression that the store is well-monitored.  
**Offer Help:** Asking "Can I help you find anything?" is great customer service and also lets a potential thief know they have been noticed.  
**Body-Worn Video:** Keeping your body-worn video with you and ready during your shift is a key safety measure. Its visible presence alone can deter aggression, and it's immediately available to record clear evidence if needed.  
**Communication Headsets:** Always having your communication headset or radio with you provides a discreet timeline to the rest of your team.  
**Use Security Measures:** Make sure CCTV signage is visible. Signs stating that shoplifters will be prosecuted can act as a deterrent.  
**Protect High-Value Goods:** Ensure expensive items have security tags or are kept in locked displays or cabinets where possible.  
**Keep it Clean and Clear:** Wide, uncluttered aisles make it harder for people to steal without being seen.

### After an Incident

Report and Recover

**1. Ensure Everyone is Safe:** Your first action is to check on the safety of yourself and your colleagues. If the person is still on the premises and you feel there is an immediate risk, call 999.

**2. Report Incidents:** Reporting crimes allows Police to identify perpetrators and bring them to justice. It also provides the intelligence the Police need to track repeat offenders and prevent future incidents.

**What to Record**  
As soon as it is safe, write down everything you can remember:

- Time and date of the incident.
- Description of the person: height, clothing, hair colour, distinctive features.
- What was said or done?
- What was stolen?
- Direction they travelled when they left.

**3. Look After Yourself:** Take a Moment. After the incident is dealt with, take a break away from the shop floor if you need to. Speak to your manager about what happened. A debrief can help you process the event and feel more confident in the future.

**Retail Crime Taskforce**

Retail crime is more than just theft; it's the threats, abuse, and fear that you and your staff can face daily. That is why Police Scotland have launched a dedicated Retail Crime Taskforce. Our mission is to provide a visible and measurable impact on Retail Crime.

**How our taskforce works for you**

**Targeted Action on Prolific Offenders**  
Instead of just reacting to individual crimes, our Taskforce uses intelligence to identify and target the small number of repeat offenders who cause the most harm and disruption in our communities.

**Stronger Partnerships with Stores**  
We are working closer than ever with businesses. By sharing information, we create a united front against crime.

We welcome any feedback you may have.  
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#NotAVictimlessCrime #RetailCrimeTaskforce





Crime Retail Industries  
**230 THIEVES LIFTED**

# In the news

Our work is already gaining media attention across Scotland. You can follow our work and join the conversation on social media.

Search for **#retailcrimetaskforce** and **#notavictimlesscrime** to see the latest updates, and feel free to use these hashtags when posting about your own work to tackle retail crime.

This bi-monthly publication will provide updates to retailers on the work of the RCTF. Please share our bulletin widely with your stores and colleagues

## Man arrested in Hamilton as part of Police Scotland operation

2021 MAY POLICE SCOTLAND CRIME HAMILTON SCOTLAND



A man has been arrested in connection to the crimes (Image: Newsquest)

A total of 234 charges have been brought against retail crime offenders since April, relating to an estimated £25,000 of stolen goods in Edinburgh alone.

Police Scotland data shows there were 22,806 shoplifting crimes between April 1 and September 30 – a rise of 3605 or 18.8 per cent – and up 60.5 per cent on the five-year average.



**ACTION** With £75k of goods stolen in ACTION With £25k of goods stolen in Edinburgh, Emma Wright and Ewan MacDonald-Russell are fighting back

**Police Scotland Edinburgh**  
Leith Retail Day of Action - (3 Arrests)

Community officers working with **#SpecialConstables** from the North East Support Team **#NEST** have conducted a day of action focusing on retail crime in **#Leith** conducting both high visibility and plain clothed patrols.

With the assistance of response officers, a male was arrested on 10 court warrants for a variety of offences, including retail theft, assaulting retail workers, and possession of weapons. The same male was also found in possession stolen property, which is subject of further enquiry. PD Asher (Dog Section) assisted with searches during this incident.

One male was also arrested in the Newkirkgate on a court warrant for retail theft and held in custody.

Shortly afterwards, a further male was arrested in the Newkirkgate for breaching their court bail conditions by being there and held in custody.



# Watch this SPAACe

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

- Expansion of RCTF funded dedicated officers on North East, Tayside and Fife divisions, for the remainder of this financial year. Alongside further funded posts for Greater Glasgow and Edinburgh divisions. Find out what the new teams are doing.
- 6 month internal and external communications campaigns to promote what the Taskforce has achieved so far and aims for the rest of the year.
- Crimestoppers Retail Crime Campaign anticipated for November/December 2025.
- Festive Retail Crime Campaign

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