



Home Office

NATIONAL RETAIL CRIME STEERING GROUP ACTION PLAN

AUGUST 2009

FOREWORD BY CO-CHAIRS OF NATIONAL RETAIL CRIME STEERING GROUP (NRCSG)



Businesses have a right to trade safely. Retail is at the heart of local communities, employing close to three million staff across the country and providing important goods and services to consumers. The sector is an essential contributor to economic growth and to the regeneration of areas affected by crime and disorder. The Government is committed to a partnership approach to tackling crime, and business also have a responsibility to play their part



in partnerships, both nationally and locally. Retail crime is not a petty or victimless crime. All too often retailers, their staff and their customers experience or witness crime and anti-social behaviour.

The Government's approach ensures that the police are working together with communities including businesses to tackle the crimes that matter most to them. The Government has provided historically high levels of funding, created new powers and new partnerships, and invested heavily in fighting crime. This has resulted in overall crime coming down by 36% since 1997. The Action Plan outlines our determination to do even more to assist businesses which are victimised by crime. It outlines a strategic approach to tackle retail crime in line with the updated Crime Strategy¹ 2009.

Retailers and their staff think that more still needs to be done to reduce crimes against retailers. They are now working with the Government alongside other businesses, trade unions and trade associations to find effective solutions and responses to crimes against business including retail theft. As part of this work we have set up, jointly with the British Retail Consortium, a National Retail Crime Steering Group (NRCSG) with representatives from both large chains and smaller retail associations and from across Government, to provide a forum to discuss and devise strategies for tackling crimes of concern to retailers.

In these current hard economic times we need to do all we can to make sure that retailers, particularly those on tight margins, are secure from the fear of crime, as well as actual crime against their businesses. This plan shows the extent of activity already undertaken under the auspices of the National Retail Crime Steering Group as well as indicating new areas we are looking to take forward.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alan Campbell".

Alan Campbell

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jane Milne".

Jane Milne

Alan Campbell, the Minister for Crime Reduction, co - chairs the group which meets quarterly, with Jane Milne, Director of Business Environment, of British Retail Consortium. (A full list of organisations that are part of the NRCSG are listed at Annex A).

¹ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/crime-strategy-07/>

BUSINESS AND RETAIL CRIME

Business and retail crime can be taken to include ‘all crime and disorder committed by or against businesses.’ The definition includes internal crimes such as customer and employee theft, fraud, e crime and false accounting, and other crime including attacks on staff, burglary, customer theft and criminal damage, as well as contraventions of legislation, for example on trading standards or health and safety. It recognises that business can be affected in many different ways and that crime can be targeted against a single person working in business, against a single business, or may be part of a wider pattern of crime which adversely impacts a number of businesses in the same sector or in the same geographical area.

Whilst the latest police recorded crime show a fall in overall acquisitive crime, shop theft increased by 10%. This is the backdrop to the action plan, albeit for one measure, and indicates why we are determined to do even more to support businesses in tackling retail crime at a time of particular challenge for them.

We have identified four categories of issues which are described below. Our action plan for tackling each of these is set out below.

1. UNDERSTANDING RETAIL AND CRIMES AGAINST BUSINESS

There are difficulties currently in assessing accurately the level of crime against retailers and a variety of sources of data concerning crime affecting them. Police recorded crime provides information on crimes reported to the police, but there is also much that can be gleaned from data held by industry and trade bodies. Retailers can also be affected by anti-social behaviour which falls below the threshold of criminal activity but which still causes distress and concern. We want to encourage police, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs)/Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and other bodies to share data and work more closely sharing best practice with regards to understanding crime against business at local, regional and national level so that effective action can be taken to tackle it.

We will increase our collective understanding of who is victimised and how by developing a new Commercial Victimisation Survey which will help us answer questions such as; are particular areas or retailers at greater risk than others of becoming a victim and in how many cases are victims targeted repeatedly? This will help to inform police priorities as identified in annual strategic assessments undertaken by CDRPs/CSPs.

The development of neighbourhood policing teams has also assisted in tackling crime against business through the gathering of intelligence from the community (including business) and we need to build on this foundation to ensure that more offenders are identified and brought to justice. We will also examine lessons learnt from HM Inspectorate of Constabulary’s consideration of implementation of the policing pledge² and identify effective practice in neighbourhood policing involving businesses. We also want to encourage business to play an active role in community meetings led by neighbouring

² <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/policing-pledge>

policing teams to ensure that the concerns of retailers are identified and acted upon.

We will also consider how retail and business interests can be represented better on police authorities and share lessons learnt.

CASE STUDY

STOKE ON TRENT

Stoke-on-Trent city centre bus station and precinct saw an increase in anti-social behaviour and minor crime, beginning to escalate into more serious crimes. Local press headlines fuelled fears that it was becoming a no-go area: 'Retailers under siege from bus station gangs'.

- There was limited business engagement and no community intelligence from that area
- The Stoke-on-Trent Business Crime Initiative took steps to identify the group responsible for the problem and shared their profiles with staff working in the business community. Members were encouraged to report every incident, even those normally considered too minor to report. Businesses were visited by Crime Initiative staff that collected information. Forty-five individuals were identified and their profiles raised by the Crime Initiative staff, based in police headquarters
- In two weeks over 1,100 pieces of information were gathered. Outcomes included several successful prosecutions; 12 Anti-Social Behaviour Orders; better engagement with the partnership; positive press coverage; and development of a more successful model for extracting community intelligence, to be deployed elsewhere

www.businesscrimeinitiative.co.uk/

(Source: Crime against Business – what businesses need to know')

2. PREVENTING RETAIL CRIME

PROTECTING PEOPLE, PREMISES AND PROPERTY

The Home Office's Crime Strategy outlines the importance of work to prevent and design out crime which is being taken forward on behalf of the Home Office by the Design and Technology Alliance. We are therefore launching a new on-line risk assessment tool with the support of the Perpetuity Group, a research group connected to Leicester University, in August 2009 to help businesses consider their crime prevention/security arrangements highlighting areas for improvement. This sits alongside other work led by the police to reduce crime.

The Alliance will play an important role in helping retailers design their premises and products so as to minimise crime including shoplifting. We are working with it to launch a new competition to identify problems and then design and disseminate innovative solutions that can help retailers to reduce crime. The competition will be launched in September 2009.

The Home Office is also launching a new £5 million capital grants fund to help small retailers in priority areas to purchase equipment such as radios, security alarms and shutters/grilles to help them reduce the risk of crime during the current economic downturn.

CASE STUDY

THAMES VALLEY

Bracknell's first Shop Watch scheme was started in July 2005 in Great Hollands Square in response to continued problems with youths gathering in the precinct and intimidating shoppers. Working with the neighbourhood officer, residents convened a meeting at the Talk Shop in the precinct which was attended by representatives from the shops, library and community centre – and the ASB coordinator from the council. The actions which followed included:

- electing the off-licence as co-ordinator and business responsible for liaising with the police
- a 'no ball games' sign outside the Indian restaurant
- installation of a mobile CCTV
- banning of certain individuals from the shops
- greater police presence (neighbourhood officer and PCSO)

ASB has virtually disappeared from the precinct. The watch scheme has expanded to include small businesses behind the shops and some homes that overlook the area. All the shopping precincts in Bracknell Forest are now members of Shop Watch, with similar success.

(Source: Neighbourhood Policing Business Guide)

3. TACKLING OFFENDERS

The Government takes retail theft very seriously. Since 1997 more shoplifters have gone to prison. In 1997, 12% of those convicted of theft from a shop were sentenced to prison, by 2007 the figure had increased to 18%. Other penalties and interventions designed to address underlying patterns of behaviour leading to criminal activity are also being used in accordance with sentencing guidelines to ensure that a clear message is given that crime should not be tolerated. This sits alongside positive interventions and work with young people to deter them from committing criminal acts in the first place.

The Government is also working with CDRPs and CSPs to reduce re-offending rates. This is very important work since we know that a high proportion of crimes are committed by a relatively small number of repeat offenders. The Prolific and other Priority Offender (PPO) scheme focuses on this target group to reduce the amount of crime they commit by deterring their offending, catching and convicting those who continue to offend and

providing rehabilitation and resettlement programmes to address the causes of their continued offending. This is delivered through multi-agency offender management arrangements developed by the CDRPs and CSPs.

In 2003 the Drug Intervention Programme (DIP) was established to provide a renewed effort to tackle those whose motivation for offending is based on their need for drugs. DIP provides these offenders with a means of addressing their addiction problems and therefore to break the cycle of offending undertaken to feed their drug habit.

Retailers have raised concerns over the mis-use of penalty notices for disorder (PNDs) for shop theft. PNDs constitute an important early sanction, when used appropriately, proportionately and in line with official guidance. In view of retailers' concerns, strengthened revised operational guidance has been issued to police forces restricting the use of PNDs to first-time offenders who are not substance mis-users. Offences of shop theft should be dealt with robustly, and there should be clear escalation where there is persistent offending. This is particularly crucial if we are to retain the confidence of businesses and consumers during an economic downturn.

CASE STUDY

PETERBOROUGH

A photo sharing scheme operates in Peterborough. This incorporates a 'banned from one, banned from all' scheme, whereby any prolific or persistent shoplifter or person committing ASB may be banned from all stores for a minimum of one year. Around 170 shops and stores (99.8%) in the city centre have signed up to this opportunity to share information and intelligence. There are currently 150 people banned, and only 4% of these have re-offended.

(Source: Neighbourhood Policing Business Guide)

4. WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The shift in recent years has been away from government setting targets centrally and towards local areas being responsible for setting their own priorities. This allows areas to have the flexibility to respond to the problems of most concern locally.

The NRCSG supports the move away from nationally imposed targets and the move towards a more localised approach to crime fighting outlined in the Crime Strategy, provided that the role of business is recognised as a key component of a safe and vibrant community. Partnership working underpins the Government's approach to tackling retail crime. The significance of confidence and the key contribution that businesses will make to the achievement of the single police confidence target is of paramount importance.

Between 2004 and 2007, the Home Office worked alongside business and trade associations to find effective solutions and responses to crime against business including retail theft, providing more than £1 million of funding to the Action Against Business Crime (AABC) group. AABC was charged to set up 120 business crime reduction partnerships (BCRPs) in towns and cities across England and Wales. There are now more than two hundred BCRPs in England and Wales, many of which are members of AABC and conform to the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) supported national accreditation standard for BCRPs. We are keen that BCRPs work with statutory bodies to identify and disseminate effective practice at regional and national level.

We are determined to make tackling retail crime and crimes against business an important priority for CDRP/CSPs. Retailers support this approach. Our objective is to ensure that the statutory annual strategic assessment compiled by CDRPs / CSPs cover this in appropriate detail in 2010-11. This is a priority action and we will be writing to CDRP/ CSPs to raise the profile of retail crime and crimes against business in time for the planning of 2010-11 assessments.

CASE STUDY

WARWICKSHIRE

Warwickshire Police lead a partnership programme called "Beating Business Crime". The programme has been jointly funded since 2002 between Warwickshire Police and the five Crime and Disorder Partnerships in the County and more recently via the Local Area Agreement. This has resulted in business crime appearing in all the Crime and Disorder Strategies and being part of normal business for all the Partners. The scheme was built around a focus of interventions to target Victims, Locations and Offenders using the problem analysis triangle. These have been channelled into three work areas delivered by a team of three dedicated business crime advisors: Business Crime Education; Business Crime Advice and Business Watch.

The scheme has been very successful in that:

- Business Crime has fallen by 33%
- Commercial burglary has fallen by 41%
- Shop lifting has fallen by 25%
- 6,400 contacts established with businesses
- 5,020 members signed up to Business Watch
- The proportion of all crime that is viewed as business crime has fallen from 38% to 25%

(Source:) Neighbourhood Policing Business Guide

ACTION PLAN

The following action plan shows what efforts are being taken by the NRCSG to tackle the problems identified. This is a live document and will be updated as necessary. For further information please contact Lee Kettlewell in the Home Office or Catherine Bowen in the British Retail Consortium.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION
Obtain a better understanding of the impact of crime on the retail sector and to encourage better reporting of offences	<p>To analyse, disseminate and make best use of existing data sources to inform work to tackle crime against business including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Crime Statistics 2008/9 • British Retail Consortium Annual Retail Crime Survey • Federation of Small Business (FSB) survey 'Listen to the Business beat campaign' • Other surveys like the British Chambers of Commerce and Co-operative Movement Crime Survey • Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW) annual survey of violence and abuse against retail staff <p>To undertake a new Commercial Victimisation Survey (results due 2010).</p>
Enable retailers to recognise effective practice in designing out the opportunities for offences/offending behaviour	<p>To develop and publish a risk assessment tool for use by retailers and Small Medium Enterprises (August 2009).</p> <p>To launch a new Design Award Competition with the Design Council to identify new ideas to tackle crime against retailers (September 2009).</p> <p>To launch a new £5 million capital fund to help small retailers in priority areas purchase equipment to reduce crime (August 2009).</p> <p>To collate and disseminate effective practice guidance for use by local partnerships and retailers (2009-10).</p> <p>To encourage more retail bodies to support USDAW's 'Freedom from fear campaign (2009-10).</p> <p>To disseminate Health and Safety Executive guidance on prevention of violence to staff in retail and licensed premises (2009-10).</p>

OBJECTIVE	ACTION
Encourage a more consistent approach to the sentencing of offenders	<p>To publish revised Penalty Notice for Disorder (PND) guidance (July 2009).</p> <p>To ensure that any problems with the operation of the PND scheme are dealt with swiftly by ACPO (On-going).</p> <p>To identify the most effective disposals from analysis of the Commercial Victimisation Survey (2010-2011).</p> <p>To work to improve the focus on repeat victims of crime against business. (2010).</p> <p>To encourage Neighbourhood Policing teams to assist in the tackling of offenders in terms of gathering intelligence from the community including businesses and delivering crime prevention messages (2009.)</p> <p>To encourage the roll-out of the award-winning project run by Greater Manchester Police and the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities to ensure that employers are complying with their duties under Health and Safety at Work Act to protect staff from violence associated with robbery and theft (2009-10).</p>
Identify effective practice and ensuring that this is adopted by CDRPs/ CSPs & BCRPs	<p>To issue guidance on business engaging with neighbourhood policing teams and business crime partnerships (Spring 2009).</p> <p>British Retail Consortium to issue guidance to store managers and retailers (Autumn 2009).</p> <p>To support the development of regional business crime fora (On-going).</p> <p>To encourage the further development of networks such as business crime reduction partnerships (On-going).</p> <p>To consider the development of new/ revised national standards for business crime reduction partnerships and similar bodies (2009-10).</p> <p>To encourage CDRPs/CSPs to include retail crime and crime against business as a priority on strategic assessments as supported by the data/evidence (On-going).</p>

ANNEX A - TERMS OF REFERENCE OF NATIONAL RETAIL CRIME STEERING GROUP

The purpose of a National Retail Crime Steering Group is to reduce retail crime. It will seek to improve the co-ordination and delivery of retail crime reduction initiatives by all stakeholders. The remit of the group is to:

1. Assess and improve the tools available to measure the scale of retail crime nationally, and encourage CDRPs/CSPs to evaluate retail crime reduction initiatives locally
2. Identify and document initiatives currently being undertaken by government, police, local business crime reduction partnerships and retailers to combat crime
3. Identify and promote effective practice for retailers to adopt in working with government, police and local partnerships, to reduce retail crime, and the underlying causes of crime.
4. Assess and improve local engagement between retailers and neighbourhood police, taking into account local crime reduction plans
5. Investigate the opportunities for improving retailer involvement in Home Office and Ministry of Justice policy development.
6. Encourage the retail sector to include crime prevention at the heart of all its business policies and practices

LIST OF CURRENT MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL RETAIL CRIME STEERING GROUP

Alan Campbell MP (Chair)	Home Office
Jane Milne (Co-chair)	Director of Business Environment, British Retail Consortium
Catherine Bowen	Crime Policy Advisor, British Retail Consortium
Alan Brown	Group Security Director, Tesco
Phillip Willsmer	Head of Operational Risk, Co-operative Group
Andrew Pope	National Business Crime Partnership Manager, Co-operative Group
Peter Kaye	Head of Business Protection, John Lewis
Mike Cherry	Home Affairs Chairman, Federation of Small Businesses
Rosina Robson	Senior Policy Advisor, Federation of Small Businesses
James Lowman	Chief Executive, Association of Convenience Stores
Jenny Brown	Public Affairs Executive, Association of Convenience Stores
John Curtis	Deputy Director, Government Office West Midlands
Katie Marsh	Head of Policy, Safer Communities, Government Office West Midlands
David Fuhr	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
Chris Morris-Perry	Ministry Of Justice
ACC Allyn Thomas	Association of Chief Police Officers Business Crime Lead
Doug Russell	Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers
Gareth Elliott	Senior Policy Advisor, British Chamber of Commerce
Simon Quin	Chief Executive, Association of Town Centre Managers
Michael Schuck	Chief Executive, Action against Business Crime
Lee Kettlewell	Acquisitive Crime Team, Home Office
Ken MacLennan-Brown	Home Office Scientific Development Branch

Contact:

Lee.Kettlewell@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

USEFUL LINKS

Arson Prevention Bureau

www.arsonpreventionbureau.org.uk/

Association of British Insurers

www.abi.org.uk

and specifically insurance protection for small businesses:

www.abi.org.uk/BookShop/ResearchReports/SME_Guide.pdf

Association of Convenience Stores

www.acs.org.uk/

Association of Town Centre Management

www.atcm.org/

British Chambers of Commerce

www.britishchambers.org.uk/

British Council of Shopping Centres

www.bpsc.org.uk/index.asp

British Retail Consortium

www.brc.org.uk/

British Security Industry Association

www.bsia.co.uk/

Business Improvement Districts

www.ukbids.org/

Business Link

www.businesslink.gov.uk

Business Watch

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/reducing-crime/business-retail-crime

The Co-operative Group

www.co-operative.coop/

including the 2008 retail crime survey:

www.co-operative.coop/Corporate/PDFs/Retail_Crime_Survey_2008.pdf

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships

www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/regions/regions_map.htm

Crimestoppers

www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Department for Business, Innovations and Skills

www.berr.gov.uk/

Federation of Small Businesses

www.fsb.org.uk/

Health and Safety Executive

www.hse.gov.uk/

including specific advice for people who work in pubs, clubs and shops on tackling violence:

www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg423.pdf

Home Office Crime Reduction Website

www.crimereduction.gov.uk

Local priorities and Local Area Agreements

www.localpriorities.communities.gov.uk

National Counter Terrorism Security Office

<http://www.nactso.gov.uk/barspubsandnightclubs.php>

Neighbourhood Policing Teams

www.direct.gov.uk/neighbourhoodpolicing

Raid-control

<http://www.raid-control.org/toolkit.php>

Rural Shops Alliance

www.rural-shops-alliance.co.uk

Secured by Design

www.securedbydesign.com

ShopWatch

<http://www.shopwatch.info/about/>

Town Centre Partnerships guides for practitioners

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/towncentrepartnerships

and

www.cleansafergreener.gov.uk/en/1/towncentre.html

Union of Shop and Distributive Workers

www.usdaw.org.uk

SECTOR GROUPS

British Institute of Innkeepers

<http://www.bii.org/>

British Oil Security Syndicate

www.bossuk.org

British Security Industry Association

www.bsia.co.uk

Eastbourne Business Crime Group

www.hicom.co.uk/BusinessSolutions

Institute of Licensing

<http://www.instituteoflicensing.org/>

National Farmers Union

www.nfuonline.com

National Farmers Union of Wales

www.nfu-cymru.org.uk

GEOGRAPHICAL NETWORKS

North East Fraud Forum

www.northeastfraudforum.co.uk

Northumbria Coalition Against Crime

www.thecoalition.org.uk

Victoria Partnership

www.victoria-partnership.co.uk

