

THE SCOTTISH CRIME REPORT

2025/26





FOREWORD

IN-STORE CRIME IN SCOTLAND

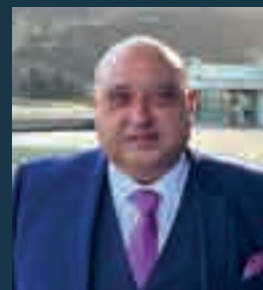
THE SCOTTISH CRIME REPORT

Retail crime remains one of the most significant challenges facing the convenience sector in Scotland today. The implications of retail crime are far reaching, affecting the store owner, their staff, and the communities they serve. Retailers and staff are regularly subject to abuse and aggression at work. Figures from Police Management Information revealed that there were 2,805 (+8.4%) Common Assaults, 5 (+140%) Serious Assaults, and 2,405 (+12.9%) Threatening/Abusive incidents recorded under the Protection of Workers (Retail and Age-Restricted Goods and Services) (Scotland) Act in 2024/25. Not only does retail crime have psychological impacts on store workers; it is also very costly. The average approximate cost of shop theft per store is £10,431 (averaging approximately £54.5 million in Scotland overall and not including other costs such as vandalism and added security). This information comes to light amid a surge in widespread shoplifting, some linked to organised crime groups, reports of staff resigning due to safety concerns, and suspected losses amounting to millions of pounds for local businesses.

The Scottish Grocers' Federation's (SGF) Crime Report 2025/26 provides the latest data on convenience retailers' experience of retail crime in Scotland. This report highlights some of the key figures from SGF's recent crime survey, which breaks down in-store crime into a range of categories, including shoplifting, violence against staff, verbal and physical abuse linked to sales refusals or age verification, incidents involving dangerous weapons, and hate crimes. The report also provides a range of resources and materials, including case studies and advice for retailers on conflict management, in-store security measures and cybercrime. Crime against retailers poses a clear and present threat to the convenience stores across Scotland. SGF continues to emphasise the urgent need for greater action from government and the Police to tackle this scourge on our sector.

GUIDANCE FOR SAFER BUSINESSES

Alongside our crime report, SGF has developed a Guidance for Safer Business document to support retailers to assess and manage the crime threat their businesses face. Every local shop is different and so too are the challenges they face from crime, but we have developed an updated package of guidance for retailers to assess the risks they face. We are grateful to our colleagues at the TMA for their invaluable support in producing this report.



DR. PETE CHEEMA OBE
SGF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SGF
Scottish Grocers' Federation



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SHOP THEFT

Shop theft continues to be the most costly and high volume form of crime that retailers in Scotland face.

Retailer responses to the SGF Crime Survey 2025:

- **54.8%** report that shoplifting has increased in the past year.
- **99.6%** report that shoplifting is a daily occurrence.
- The average cost of shop theft per store is £10,431 per year, among respondents (approximately £54.5 million across Scotland) (not including other costs such as vandalism and added security).
- **26.3%** report that police response times to shoplifting incidents are either unsatisfactory or significantly delayed (to the degree that it undermines the effectiveness of reporting the crime).
- **10.9%** report they are unlikely or very unlikely to report shoplifting incidents to the police.



* SGF received a total of 732 survey responses (14% of all stores in Scotland) from stores across a range of symbol groups and independent retailers

(**some responses are provided in aggregate across multiple stores*).



DEFINITION

Theft is the taking and appropriating of property without the consent of its rightful owner or other lawful authority.



STAFF SAFETY & AWARENESS

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION

Conflict under any circumstances is unpleasant and can easily escalate into verbal or physical confrontations which are completely unacceptable.



ADVICE AND TIPS

- Step back. Don't rush in. Take a moment to assess the situation.
- Breathe. Take a second to take a deep breath. The situation might not be as bad as you think. Taking a moment to yourself will calm you down and help you to think rationally.
- Evaluate your options.
 - Can you talk this person down?
 - Do you need the assistance of another member of staff?
 - Do you need to walk away?
- Communication is key. Only 7% of our communication is the spoken word. Your tone and body language contribute 93% of your communication. Make sure the customer knows that they have your full attention and that you are taking their concern seriously. Empathy and positive engagement can help to reduce or prevent confrontation. Ask how you can help and don't assume you know what the customer wants.
- Spot the signs of aggression early. Look for the physical signs that someone is becoming impatient or annoyed. Let them know that you will be with them shortly or that you understand their frustration and will be happy to help when you can.
- Keep calm and talk in a restrained tone. Remember that you are the only one who can resolve their issue, and they will have to calm down to hear you. If necessary, you can raise your voice to exert authority and ask them to calm down or refrain.
- If you sense that no amount of placating or assuring is working, and the customer is becoming aggressive think about how you are going to remove yourself from the situation. Do you need the assistance of a colleague?
- Do you need to walk or run to a secure room, or even leave the premises?
- Always maintain a safe space and if necessary, ask the customer firmly to step back from you.
- No physical or verbal abuse is acceptable so do not hesitate to inform management, or if required report it to the police.

MENTAL HEALTH

77.8% of businesses that responded have at least one member of staff who has experienced mental health & wellbeing issues as a result of the impact of retail crime.

PHYSICAL AND VERBAL ABUSE



DEFINITION

Assaults and threats are incidents where employees are assaulted, threatened or intimidated, as a result of disagreements with customers or other employees.

* SGF received a total of 732 survey responses (14% of all stores in Scotland) from stores across a range of symbol groups and independent retailers

(*some responses are provided in aggregate across multiple stores).

Retailer responses to the SGF Crime Survey 2025:

- **78.3%** report that violence against staff occurs at least once a month.
- **73.7%** report that incidents involving a weapon (such as a knife, club or firearm) occur at least once a month.
- **57.4%** report that violence against staff has increased in the past year, with the remaining reporting similar levels.
- **42.6%** report that police response times to violence against staff incidents are either unsatisfactory or significantly delayed (to the degree that it undermines the effectiveness of reporting the crime).

- Refusing a sale or asking for proof of age are among the most common factors contributing to the number of incidents of abuse and threatening behaviour in-store.

- **99.4%** of respondents experience at least weekly incidents of abuse when refusing a sale or when asking for proof of age.



HATE CRIME



80.6%

report that hate crime occurs at least once a month.

DEFINITION

Hate Crime is behaviour which is both criminal and rooted in prejudice. Any crime which is understood by the victim, or any other person as being motivated (wholly or partly) by malice or ill will toward a social group.

The protected characteristics covered by The Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act are: age; disability; race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins; religion or belief; sexual orientation; transgender identity; and, variations in sex characteristics.



TOP TIPS FOR PREVENTION

SHOP THEFT

1. Install a good quality CCTV system. It deters offenders and is essential when providing police with the evidence they need to make an arrest.
2. Keep your high value items in sight. This might mean lowering shelving units or having additional dedicated CCTV.



VIOLENT CRIME AND ABUSE

1. Train your staff to deal with aggression. The training needs to be regularly updated and there needs to be a system for staff to report incidents and be given support.
2. Work with the local community to address your concerns. Make sure the store is viewed as a community asset, support local schools, community groups and good causes.



ROBBERY

- 1 Take simple measures by reducing the pay-off, like counter cache and reducing cash levels in tills.
- 2 Good conflict management training is essential. This will help colleagues remain calm in these situations. Colleagues should never put assets before their life and should comply with the demands of the offender.



THERE ARE THREE KEY ELEMENTS IN EVERY CRIME:

The key element you have most control over in-store is to minimise the opportunity.





REPORT IT, DON'T ACCEPT IT

Every day across the UK there are more than **2000 incidents of violence and abuse** towards shop workers.

The Protection of Workers Act (Scotland) makes it an offence to assault or behave in a threatening or abusive way towards a shop worker.

This is not part of your job, **don't put up with it, report it!**

SGF ACTION:

CONVENIENCE RETAIL CRIME IN SCOTLAND

SGF and our partners are leading the campaign urging the Scottish Government to put an emergency plan into action to tackle the threatening surge in retail crime in Scotland. We want the Scottish Government, Police Scotland and the Crown Office to take action:

- More resources for the Scottish Justice System, focused on supporting enforcement organisations to tackle the rise in retail crime.
- Improved police response times, swifter action taken against perpetrators of retail crime and reducing the backlog of cases awaiting trial.
- Improved feedback for retailers when they report a crime and exploring more efficient methods of reporting and providing information to the police.

SGF is taking action to support the sector and raise awareness about the damaging impact of retail crime:

- Figures from Police Management Information revealed that there were 2,805 (+8.4%) Common Assaults, 5 (+140%) Serious Assaults, and 2,405

(+12.9%) Threatening/Abusive incidents recorded under the Protection of Workers (Retail and Age-Restricted Goods and Services) (Scotland) Act in 2024/25.

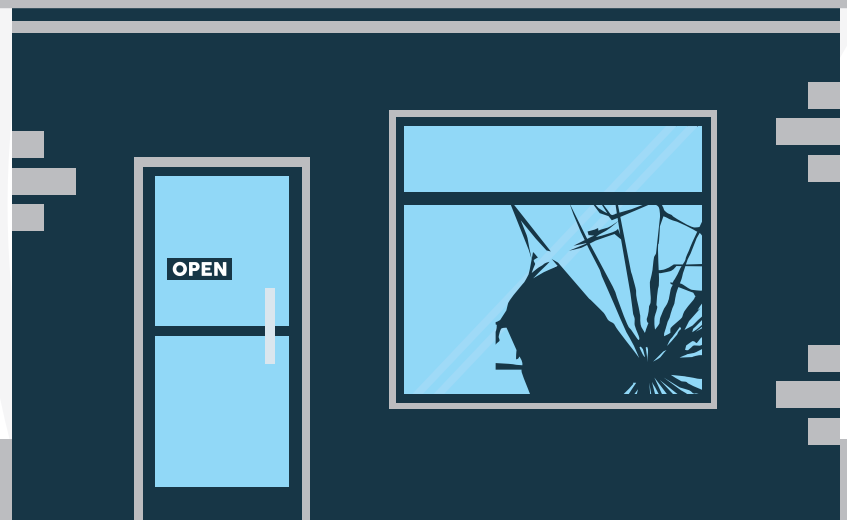
- SGF has regular engagement with Ministers, MSPs, Scottish Government officials and Police Scotland, highlighting the challenge of retail crime for convenience retailers. Alongside Retailers Against Crime, we have relaunched our joint campaign 'Don't Put Up With It!', which encourages retailers to take a zero-tolerance approach by reporting all offences against them.
- SGF welcomes the renewal of an additional £3m funding from the Scottish Government to tackle retail crime and continues to work closely with colleagues in the Rural Acquisitive & Business Crime Prevention team, the Retail Crime Task Force, the SPAACE Steering Group, and Police Scotland's Your Safety Matters group – and is a signatory of the National Assault Pledge (raising awareness and protecting workers from physical and verbal abuse).

Every day across the UK there are more than 2,000 incidents of violence and abuse towards retailers. The cost of crime to retailers was £4.2 billion in 2024.

The Protection of Workers (Retail) (Scotland) Act came into force in August 2021. It provides important legal protection for shop staff against assaults, threats and abuse.

**Figures provided by the
Scottish Retail Consortium (Jan 2025)*

Effective political engagement from SGF ensured that the Protection of Workers (Retail) (Scotland) Act 2021 was passed by Parliament. Figures from Police Management Information revealed that there were 5,215 Common Assaults, Serious Assaults, and Threatening/Abusive incidents recorded under the Act in 2024/25.





Designed by Innovative Technology®

Do you sell age-restricted products?

Prevent selling to minors & avoid fines

Help your staff with assisted age estimation. MyCheckr clearly shows if a manual ID check is recommended.



The person in front of the MyCheckr is 18 or over*



The person in front of the MyCheckr is under 18

*MyCheckr can be set to any age threshold



MyCheckr^{Mini} - compact option without screen

Ideal for retailers selling age-restricted products such as: Alcohol, Vapes, Tobacco etc.



Acts as a deterrent



One-off cost, no subscription fees



Reduces abuse towards staff & confrontation



Accuracy and privacy assured



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'IT'LL COST YOU' CAMPAIGN

The 'It'll Cost You' campaign is aimed at raising awareness amongst adults that a proxy purchase of alcohol is a criminal offence which carries a fine of up to £5,000, 3 months in prison, or both. And through this activity contribute to tackling underage drinking.

Asking an adult to buy alcohol for under 18s is one of the most common tactics used by youngsters to access alcohol. It is an offence in Scotland for an adult to buy or



effective partnership between Police Scotland, Police Scotland Youth Volunteers, Community Alcohol Partnerships and the Scottish Alcohol Industry Partnership (SAIP). The SAIP is a platform for the Scottish alcohol industry to support, devise and deliver initiatives that contribute towards the promotion of responsible consumption and tackle harmful drinking. CAP collaborates with local community groups to reduce alcohol harm among young people, improve their health and wellbeing and enhance their communities.

2025 also marked the fourth year the campaign was delivered at the national level. It runs over a six-week period and coincides with the summer school holidays. It is a multi-channel campaign utilising in store messaging (posters, window stickers, digital screens and in store radio), social media, ads in newspapers, direct consumer engagement with popup activities in store and at community events.

attempt to buy alcohol for someone who is under the age of 18. This is known as proxy purchase and for those that do it the consequences can be severe.

Whilst the campaign is clearly aimed at adults, young people under 18 and children need to understand that not only are there serious consequences for the adults they ask to make a purchase for them, but drinking alcohol could also place them in dangerous or vulnerable situations. Therefore, the overarching aims of the campaign are to protect children from harm, reduce crime and antisocial behaviour and make our communities safer.

As well as the partnership approach another strength of the campaign is its flexibility, whilst there is a national focus on the campaign during the summer school holidays. Police divisions and other stakeholders can deploy the campaign throughout the year if needed.

Proxy alcohol purchasing continues to be an issue across Scottish communities. It is not an easy crime to detect. Retailers are at the forefront of tackling this issue. The campaign Steering Group led by SGF are at the first stages of planning delivery of the 2026 campaign.

More information on the campaign can also be found at www.itwillcostyou.com/

2025 was the 10th year since the campaign it was first delivered as a pilot in Motherwell and Wishaw and continues to be delivered through an





MANAGING CRIME

Crime is one of the biggest operational challenges for retailers and the illustration below outlines some of the key considerations for managing crime.

Assessing the vulnerabilities of your business to crime and planning a proportionate response is essential, whether it is installing CCTV or providing additional training for staff. An example risk assessment for a convenience store is available from the Health and Safety Executive website:

www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/risk-assessment-template-and-examples.htm



CUSTOMER SERVICE

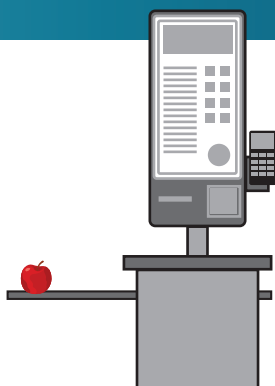
Make eye contact with customers when they enter the store and acknowledge them.

Reduce queuing in-store, as it can be a trigger for customer frustration.

SELF-SCAN TILLS

Ensure you have sufficient staff to authorise items during busy periods.

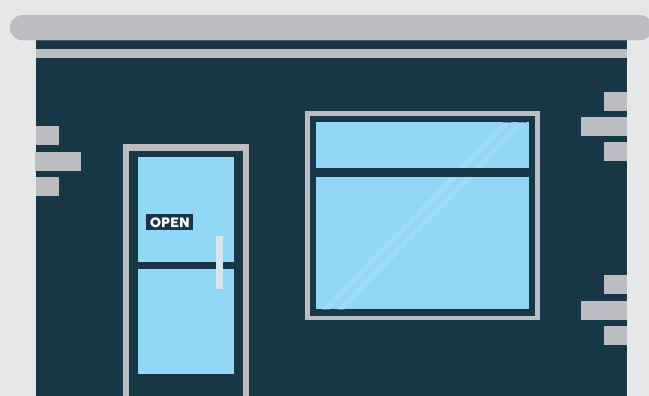
Ensure staff are trained to support customers to scan difficult items through tills correctly such as fruit and vegetables.




POLICE

Get to know your local community police officer.

Attend local community meetings and email your local police office to raise your concerns through 'contact us' on the Police Scotland website, where you will also find more information.



EXTERNAL SECURITY

Ensure that all doors and windows are secured to prevent housebreaking.

For high-risk stores, consider the installation of external shutters (this may require planning consent).

Where reasonably practicable, advertising should be restricted to allow for clear viewing into and out of the premises.



HATE CRIME

Report hate crime by telephone, 999 (emergency) 101 (non-emergency).

In person at any police office.

Or attend at a third-party centre (details online for your area).



CCTV

Ensure one camera provides quality images of everyone entering your premises and a second covers the till.

A minimum of six frames per second should be used on your camera. Ensure recorded images are similar quality to live images and all images have a time and date.

Identify the most important areas of the store for camera location and consider the angle of view and lighting.



INTERNAL THEFT

Regularly monitor stock levels and stock rooms to deter theft by employees.

Theft by an employee is a serious offence and breach of trust, it should be reported to the police.

BLINDSPOTS

Reduce height of stock shelves to remove 'blindspots' in-store.

CASH

Reduce the amount of cash held in tills and on your premises.

Change the routine of banking procedures so they are not easily observable.

TILL POSITION

Are high value goods or targeted products (meat, cheese, alcohol) in view of the till?

Ensure that the front of the store is visible from the till, so staff can see customers approaching.



AGE RESTRICTED SALES

Ensure you have visible signage at the entrance, till and shelf edges of your store.

Make sure staff know the store policy and acceptable proof of age documents.

STAFF

Make sure staff have been informed about:

Security measures such as panic buttons and CCTV.

Internal and external crime reporting structures.

Dealing with abusive customers.

SCOTSS & SCOTTISH TRADING STANDARDS



PROTECTING CONSUMERS AND SUPPORTING BUSINESS

Trading Standards services in Scotland are delivered by local councils, and they enforce both UK and Scottish laws that protect consumers and businesses, prevent illegal practices, and investigate consumer complaints.

In general Trading Standards services:

- **Protect consumers:** Prevent scams, doorstep crime, and poor workmanship
- **Protect businesses:** Provide advice and guidance, and prevent unfair competition
- **Enforce laws:** Ensure that goods are accurately measured, and that prices are marked correctly
- **Audit businesses:** Audit high-risk businesses, such as food producers, importers, and retailers
- **Conduct market surveillance:** Prevent unsafe or illegal products from entering the market.

SCOTSS acts as a central resource for Scottish trading standards services, we spread good practice and help coordinate local council activities and project work across different legislative areas, for example in 2025, our Medical Weighing project was carried out by councils right across Scotland - although not in the public eye, the incorrect or inaccurate weighing of patients can have serious and life threatening consequences, especially where drug administration is calculated in relation to body weight.

SCOTSS projects have also highlighted issues around short-weight packs of meat, short measure delivery of rural fuel oil supplies, and the safety of e-bikes and scooters. Our members across Scotland are routinely responsible for monitoring the safety of imported goods at ports, for example the safety of imported goods through Grangemouth port; checking production at manufacturing plants for weight accuracy, for example at bottling plants and large packers; providing a Weights and Measures service traceable to UK National Standards through a network of metrology laboratories; protecting the food chain through Animal Health and Welfare duties, and visiting retailers to make sure the whole supply chain is compliant.

In short pretty much anything that ends up with a consumer will have had some sort of check by trading standards before getting there! Trading Standards also deals with all sorts of Fair Trading issues, from misdescriptions, to pricing, to scams – and most local authorities also support a trusted trader scheme, that local consumers can utilise for free to be certain that they won't get scammed!

A key trading standards focus remains on tobacco and vapes, tobacco being the single biggest preventable cause of death in Scotland, and vaping has the potential for added nicotine addiction to threaten Scotland's young people, as well as being an environmental nuisance with many cheap vapes still being littered on a weekly basis, despite the Single Use Vapes ban last year.

SCOTSS coordinates most of the work done in these areas, we liaise with Scottish and UK Governments and are active across areas such as under age sales of tobacco and vapes, sales of illegal vapes, and Operation CeCe which is a partnership with HMRC to disrupt the supply of illegal, smuggled, and counterfeit tobacco at the retail level. Operation CeCe has been extremely successful across the UK with over 20 million sticks of tobacco seized last year from small local shops. A new sanctions regime has also been introduced through HMRC so that penalties of up to £10,000 can be issued to sellers of illegal tobacco. This has been very successful with over £1.3m of fines issued by HMRC this year against illicit tobacco sellers, referred by trading standards.

In all our efforts, the ultimate aim is to provide a level playing field for business and a safe and fair market for consumers. If there are any queries about the work of trading standards in Scotland please contact our coordinator, contact details below.

CONTACT

Ken Daly, National Coordinator
coordinator@scotss.org.uk
 07720538349

SCOTSS, representing the trading standards service in Scotland.

The Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards in Scotland (SCOTSS), is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SC047951). Our members are professional trading standards managers representing every Scottish local authority trading standards service.

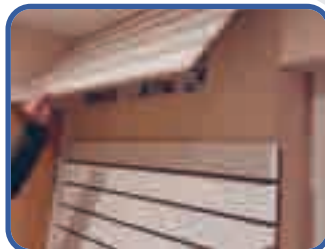
The Society liaises with local council colleagues across the UK, and engages with government and others around the operation of the consumer protection landscape, providing leadership and consistency to Scotland's 31 trading standards teams. We aim to educate, coordinate, and support.

UNDER AGE SALES OF TOBACCO AND VAPES

- Never sell to under 18s
- Have an Age Verification Policy
- Train your staff
- Fixed Penalty Charges start at £200

SUV AND WEEE REGULATIONS

- SUVs banned since June 2025
- Takeback waste vapes
- Have a waste bin instore
- FPNs and fines start at £200
- Keep records



OPERATION CECE (SCOTLAND)

- Disrupting the supply of illegal tobacco at retail
 - Counterfeit cigarettes
 - 'Cheap' Whites
 - Smuggled cigarettes
 - Hand Rolling Tobacco
- New Tobacco Sanctions
 - Fines of up to £10,000 from HMRC
 - Over £1.3m in fines in past year
 - Scottish councils submit 40% of all UK sanction referrals
- Action locally by Scottish local authority trading standards
 - Over 850,000 sticks seized from retail shops in Oct-Dec 2025
 - Use of detection dogs
 - Coordinated by SCOTSS

CONTACT US



POLICE SCOTLAND RETAIL CRIME TASKFORCE

As Police Scotland's Retail Crime Taskforce reach eight months in operation, we give insight on who the team are, what they do and how early results are already making a positive impact for retailers. Police Inspector Emma Wright, a lead for the Taskforce, explains more.

WHO ARE WE?

The Retail Crime Taskforce (RCTF) is Police Scotland's dedicated response to the rising threat of theft, abuse, and violence faced by retailers. Officially launched in April 2025, the taskforce is backed by a £3 million commitment from the Scottish Government to empower us to protect retailers and their employees across the country.



Inspector Emma Wright at the Crimestoppers Retail Crime Campaign Launch.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Put simply the Taskforce consists of a Central Team operating across all four strands of the approach. This includes Police Officers, Analysts and Crime Prevention/Architectural Liaison Officers. The team develops intelligence and co-ordinates the investigation of Retail Crime, in support of Local Policing. They also develop and share good practice to improve the policing response. They lead on producing prevention strategies and interventions to break the cycle of retail offending and they work with retailers and other stakeholders to help improve protective measures against retail crime. Finally, the key focus of the Prepare function is to develop a platform for retailers to directly report shop theft and improve the efficiency of investigations.

In addition, the Taskforce has Police Officers within the Local Policing areas of the North East, Tayside, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Fife and Lanarkshire. These teams look to pursue the highest harm repeat offenders and Organised Retail Crime Groups (ORCGs) and bring them to justice. Operation Dynos sits within this structure and deals with the criminal exploitation of vulnerable young people to commit retail crime for organised criminals.

Local Policing Teams can also bid into the RCTF for assistance and/or funding to support activity in their local communities, in line with the Four P approach.

WHAT DO WE DO?

The Four Ps Approach

Our strategy for tackling Retail Crime is built on the proven Four P Framework, which is used across policing in the UK.



PREVENT

Stop people becoming perpetrators of retail crime



PURSUE

Stop Retail Crime by bringing perpetrators to justice



PROTECT

Strengthen the collective protection against retail crime



PREPARE

Mitigate against the impact of retail crime

WHAT IS THE IMPACT FOR RETAILERS?

Positive feedback is already being received from retailers who report enhanced visibility, greater collaboration and robust enforcement. From a

quantitative perspective, we have been working hard to collate data on the results of our collective RCTF-initiated activity, where the positive impact is becoming increasingly evident.

HEADLINE ACHIEVEMENTS (TO 30TH NOVEMBER 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, specifically aligned to the activity of the RCTF.

2,366	Shoplifting Charges/Detections
625	Intelligence Logs Submitted
412	Retail Worker Offence Charges
459	Arrests Made
1625	Suspects Identified by RCTF
33	Organised Crime Groups Identified
206	Electronic Briefings Disseminated
66	Disruptions Against OCGs

RETAILER FEEDBACK

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

"Tackling retail crime and anti-social behaviour is a key priority for the Society as we work to keep our stores safe and welcoming for colleagues, members, and customers. We are delighted to be working in partnership with Police Scotland's Retail Crime Taskforce to strengthen our approach. Their support – from training our retail colleagues to developing effective in-store strategies – has been invaluable. They've helped bring much-needed focus to retail crime and its impact on our colleagues and the communities we serve, and it's vital we sustain this momentum."

**Margaret Anne Clark, Chief Operating Officer Services,
Scotmid Co-operative**

WHAT NEXT?

Inspector Wright explains, "The Taskforce has approved funding until the end of March 2026. During this time, we will continue our mission to provide a visible and measurable impact on Retail Crime. Positively we have seen the rate at which shop theft is increasing on last year slowing since our inception and we look to build upon this"

"Good progress has been made but there is still more to do – we will be focussing on delivering an improved process for retailers (of all sizes) to report crimes to the police more quickly and reduce the time it takes to gather evidence. We are working closely with the Criminal Justice System to deliver more efficient and effective outcomes, including initiatives to tackle the drivers of Retail Crime and successfully divert repeat offenders from committing crimes. We continue to work with Local Policing areas to support and provide funding to deliver local initiatives in your areas. We know that retail crime affects us all and has a huge impact on retailers and their staff – we want to make our shops safer spaces for everyone."

HOW CAN RETAILERS GET INVOLVED?

The Taskforce engages with retailers via our Retailer Bulletin, Joint Retailer Forum (JRF), Retail Watch and Social Media channels. If you would like to receive our bi-monthly Bulletin or become part of our JRF, then please get in touch using the details below.

You can contact us at:

SCDRetailCrimeTaskforce@scotland.police.uk

We use **#RetailCrimeTaskforce** and **#NotAVictimlessCrime** on Social Media.



TAKE BACK CONTROL WITH FACEWATCH

**PROTECT YOUR
PEOPLE AND
YOUR ASSETS**

facewatch.co.uk
enquiries@facewatch.co.uk
0207 930 3225

The trusted name in retail crime prevention

GROUPS PROTECTING INNOVATION AND FIGHTING CRIME TOGETHER



Intellectual Property Office

The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) is the UK Government body responsible for intellectual property (IP) rights including patents, designs, trade marks, copyright, and designs. It is responsible for intellectual property policy, educating businesses and consumers about IP rights and responsibilities, granting UK patents, trade marks and design rights, and also supporting enforcement of IP rights.

The IPO has a dedicated team which works closely with private industry and law enforcement partners to tackle counterfeiting and piracy, through the development and dissemination of intelligence and coordination of resources through a national network of IP Crime and Infringement Coordinators, including in Scotland.



www.gov.uk/ipo

Intellectual Property Office is an operating name of the Patent Office



Scottish Anti-Illicit Trade Group

Safeguarding Communities and Businesses

Re-launched in March 2025, the Scottish Anti-Illicit Trade Group is a multi-agency partnership led by the IPO Coordinator for Scotland.

The group brings together over 50 members consisting of public and private sector stakeholders, law enforcement and industry partners.

The group aims to:

- Coordinate activity, share updates, and exchange best practice
- Raise awareness and educate consumers about IP crime
- Collaborate to identify crime trends and strengthen enforcement skills

This aligns with the IPO's Counter Infringement Strategy 2022–2027 and Scotland's Serious Organised Crime Taskforce Strategy.

SUPPLY CHAIN GUIDANCE

Criminals exploit supply chains in increasingly sophisticated ways. Businesses can protect themselves and the market by following some checks.

Before you buy:

- Be wary of prices that seem too good to be true
- Verify contact details and company background
- Avoid suspicious domain names and poor-quality websites
- Use WHOIS tools to check domain registration
- Research reviews and reports of scams
- Ensure secure payment methods and clear returns policies



If you spot a suspicious seller:

- Exit the site immediately to reduce cyber risk
- Alert staff, partners, and contacts
- Report to Trading Standards: www.gov.uk/find-local-trading-standards-office

Tick Box

Keep it **real**. Keep it **legal**.

The Tick Box scheme is a voluntary code of practice for self-storage providers, led by the IPO with Trading Standards and law enforcement partners.

It prevents facilities from being misused to store counterfeit, illicit, or unsafe goods.

Businesses are encouraged to use approved self-storage providers under the Tick Box scheme.

More information:
tick-box.org.uk

RETAIL CRIME:

THE BRUTAL REALITY (CASE STUDIES)

Male stopped for theft of alcohol. Male pulled out needles from pocket and threatened to stab staff. Staff backed off and male ran away.

Assault on a member of public at an ATM machine. Male using the ATM was punched while laying on ground, head kicked and stomped on rib cage.

Known youths enter store and take fifteen bottles of alcohol. A youth takes the officer's phone from his hand and tries to smash it by stomping on it. Then female youth kicks officer on the stomach when he tried to grab her bag.

Two males stopped for theft of alcohol. Male in black hoodie pulled a knife out and police were called.

Youths punched and kicked two employees. Both youths were refused entry and were asked to leave. Both re-enter through the exit doors and became verbally aggressive, when asking them to leave store. An employee dropped their glasses after being slapped across the face and the second employee picking the glasses up sustained a kick to the face. Both employees were left with facial injuries.

Approached staff on door and informed them that he was looking for the security guy that put him out of store previously, saying he was going to "stab F*** out of him". The staff observed him holding a knife inside his jacket.

Male entered the store intoxicated and walked into the warehouse eating stock. When he was asked to leave, he became violent. Was arrested at the time of incident. This resulted in one colleague left with bruising to the chest and a second with a fractured eye socket.



Staff member approached knowing the group to have been involved in disorder previously asking them to leave. As the group were leaving the female assaulted the member of staff by hitting her to the face. The young male then spat on the member of staff before the group left.

Male stopped by security staff for theft of meat. Male got very aggressive and pulled a knife out on various staff to get away.

An attempted assault was made on a staff member with a hammer, and a shop window was smashed. The same group were also in another group store where one of the males and the female assaulted a staff member. Further information: Female went aggressively in the face of the staff member and thereafter ripped the bodycam off his vest. Male thereafter approached the staff member inside the store swinging punches in his direction and was in possession of a bottle which he had taken from his pocket and held behind his back. He then swung the bottle and hit the staff member to his back and thereafter launched the bottle towards him making him fall to the ground. He then observed one of the suspects to be in possession of a hammer and immediately protected his face. He then felt a blow to the back of his head followed by kicks and punches. The staff member felt pain and noticed blood coming from his nose.

Two male suspects attempted a trolley push out. All goods were recovered. During the incident one of the males used a vehicle to strike a colleague multiple times. Police attended and the male was arrested at the scene.

An unknown male's card was declined. When staff asks him to return to the store, he attacks the staff member pulling him over and kicking him.

RETAIL CRIME:

THE BRUTAL REALITY (CASE STUDIES)



Female stopped for theft became violent towards security by lashing out and attempting to scratch at one officer's face and eyes. Potential neglect of young child with her at the time. Female continued towards security, stating she will return to stab officers involved.

Male stopped by security staff for theft. Male got very aggressive and pulled a knife out on various staff to get away.

Subject set off alarm on exit. Aggression displayed and stated she was HIV and would spit. Assaulted manager by punch to head. Made off on foot but arrested and detained.

Two male shoplifters known to the store manager were asked to leave the store. When being escorted one of the males grabbed stock and tried to run out of the store. He became very aggressive picking up baskets

and throwing them at staff trying to smash them over a member of staff's head.

Two females and one male entered store, filled trolley with meat, groceries and alcohol then stopped. The females threatened to slit the manager's throat.

Male attempted to shoplift various items. Upon challenge, goods were recovered but male got verbally abusive towards staff. A customer entered at the same time and exclaimed that he shouldn't speak to her like that. Male started getting physically aggressive to staff and customer. Male proceeded to get extremely violent threatening myself and the customer with threats of violence and stabbing. Male attempted to force entry by kicking the door. Male picked up an item from outside and smashed in the doors window, as well as the main window, shattering both.

Delivering next generation security

Trusted brands like Kaba and La Gard meet the future with CenconX and Axessor Apexx — innovative solutions for every security need.



FOOD CRIME: THE RISK TO YOUR BUSINESS

COUNTERFEIT ALCOHOL INVESTIGATION

SFCIU and Local Authorities recently worked together to remove counterfeited 'vodka' from a number of independent convenience stores across Scotland. The 'vodka' contained isopropyl alcohol which can pose a significant threat to public health and reflected the disregard for consumer safety from those involved in its production and supply. To manage the threat, SFCIU worked closely with public health agencies, the brand owner, and key partners including Local Authorities and Police Scotland. Businesses found selling this product have had their alcohol licenses revoked by their respective Local Authority and reported for consideration of criminal prosecution.

HOW TO SUPPORT FOOD CRIME PREVENTION

To prevent food crime, SFCIU collaborates with a wide range of partners and industry stakeholders. Businesses

are encouraged to take proactive steps to reduce their exposure to food crime. To assist with this, SFCIU has created a Food Crime Risk Profiling Tool that helps Food Business Operators assess their specific vulnerabilities and implement measures to mitigate risk. This tool provides a tailored risk profile, highlighting potential areas of concern. Please go to Food Standards Scotland website to access the tool and get more information.

HOW TO REPORT A FOOD CRIME

Building trust in your supply chain is essential, but if you suspect you have been affected by food crime please contact SFCIU. For example, if a supplier trades in product you suspect to have authenticity or traceability concerns, SFCIU provide a confidential route for food crime matters to be investigated.

Prevention is a key priority for SFCIU, working in partnership with businesses to help prevent and combat food crime. They also collaborate with key stakeholder organisations to investigate any suspected cases and safeguard the integrity of the food supply chain.

Food crime can be reported in one of the following ways:

- Call the free and confidential Scottish Food Crime Hotline (**0800 028 7926**), in partnership with Crimestoppers.
- You can also submit information using the Crimestoppers online web form
- The SFCIU can be contacted directly and in confidence at **foodcrime@fss.scot**



¹ The Cost of Food Crime Phase 2 - Executive Summary, 10th October 2023, Food Standards Agency

² Food Crime Risk Profiling Tool: www.foodstandards.gov.scot/risk-profiling-tool

FOOD CRIME:

THE RISK TO YOUR BUSINESS

**REPORT
FOOD
CRIME !**

Call 0800 028 7926
FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL

**SCOTTISH GROCER'S FEDERATION - FOOD CRIME -
THE RISK TO YOUR BUSINESS**

This year has seen the Scottish Food Crime and Incidents Unit (SFCIU) involved in food crime investigations ranging from the sale of counterfeit alcohol to tea fraudulently labelled as Scottish. Food crime poses a diverse threat to Scottish consumers and businesses, ranging from minor criminality to highly sophisticated fraud. It is estimated that food crime could cost the UK as much as £1.96 billion annually .

WHAT IS FOOD CRIME?

As a business you are vulnerable to many types of criminality. Food crime is another way in which criminals can pose a threat to your customers, your supply chain and your reputation. Food crime refers to fraudulent practices within the supply chain that compromise product authenticity and traceability. Driven by financial gain, it involves adulteration, substitution, or misrepresentation of products and/or ingredients. Examples include altering durability dates to extend shelf life which compromises product safety, misrepresenting the origin of imported goods as Scottish, or falsely labelling commodities as organic to

inflate their value.

Identifying that you have been the victim of fraud can be challenging, as this type of crime can often remain undetected. Perpetrators of food crime show no concern for your reputation, financial losses, or consumer safety. Such criminality can occur at any point in the supply chain and factors such as economic pressures, geopolitical conflicts, climate-related challenges, and complexities surrounding imports and border controls heighten the risk of food crime.

**WHO ARE THE SCOTTISH FOOD CRIME AND
INCIDENTS UNIT?**

The SFCIU is the investigations and intelligence arm of Food Standards Scotland, responsible for tackling and preventing food crime to safeguard consumers and uphold the reputation of legitimate food businesses. Bringing together intelligence gathering, investigative work and incident response, the SFCIU works to identify and disrupt food crime while also managing food and feed safety incidents, ensuring swift action is taken whenever there is a risk from contaminated or unsafe products

ROBBERY

Make sure you are utilising existing security measures to prevent your premises becoming a target for robbers. Assess your risk by following these steps: identifying the hazards, deciding who might be harmed and how, evaluating the risks and deciding on precautions, recording the findings and implementing them, and regularly reviewing your policies.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS POLICE REQUEST FOR CRIME REPORTS



TOP TIPS

1. Be compliant and passive with the robber's instructions but remain in control.
2. When safe, call the police and write down a description of the robber(s) immediately.
3. Reduce the amount of cash held on the premises.
4. Change your banking procedures regularly, so they are not observable to offender.

Find out how CSS solutions can protect your retail business

The Grocery challenge – Maximising the bottom line in 2026



Sensormatic

AUTHORISED PARTNER

Sensor Matic is the Global market leader in providing retailers with intelligent loss prevention solutions (AM, RF and RFID-based), Inventory Intelligence, Shopper Insights and Operational Excellence for over 55 years. Shrinkage/Theft – Food Safety – Open Merchandising – Energy Efficiency

What some of Sensormatic direct customers say:

Costcutter

"Using Sensormatic Solutions Digital Food Safety system has resulted in cost savings for our business while encouraging staff to maintain compliance and keep up-to-date food safety records. We especially benefited from the automatic reminders."

Michelle O'Brien, Managing Director,
O'Brien's Costcutter

ASDA

"A new world of visibility has opened up. Having a clearer picture of LP operations will enable Asda to compare performance metrics through data insights. If a group of stores has been hit by a particular organized retail crime group we can quickly notify police and security in neighbouring stores. It allows us to be more proactive in loss prevention. We're not reading a report from a few weeks ago."

Andrew Rees, Asda's Senior Manager for Asset Protection



Grocery retail markets have undergone dramatic changes in the past few years. Contactless and self-checkout have broadened the product ranges and moved far beyond basic food supply to include higher margin categories.



TAGGING SYSTEMS



SELF-CHECKOUT



AI CCTV



LOITERING

Acousto-Magnetic (AM) technology remains the preferred solution in the grocery sector, thanks to:

- Smallest label sizes
- Highest pick rates with wide exits
- Works on most liquids and metals
- Can detect merchandise within metal food tins and metal shopping carts
- Protects exits up to 2.5m between the detection pedestals
- Virtually no false alarms
- Wide detection coverage; pedestals concealed or discreet options
- Highly immune to spurious signals common to store environments, travel insurance claims
- Maximized floor selling space with minimal restrictions on placement of tagged merchandise

AM Technology will not block legitimate alarms or cause false alarms in day-to-day grocery operations, cause by:



We work with United Wholesale, Davids Kitchen, G101, some Londis, Nisa and more.



Sensormatic

Value Added Reseller
Authorized Partner

For additional information and arrange a security review contact us at **0800 783 6486** visit **WWW.CSSLTD.CO.UK** or email us at **callum.connelly@cssltd.co.uk** Offices at: **GLASGOW – EDINBURGH – STIRLING – WHITBURN – FIFE – ABERDEEN**



Our experienced fire & security team at CSS have been providing solutions for Scotland since 1986

CSS OFFER A PERSONAL ONE-STOP SHOP FOR YOUR SECURITY

Shoplifting crime reports show increases by 17%

from 40,554 to 47,381 in 2025, which have increased by 124% from 21,136 the year ending June 2021. Shoplifting is at its highest level since records began in 1971.



PROTECTING SCOTLAND SINCE 1986

At Connelly Security Systems Group, We offer a One-Stop-Shop to over 30,000 customers, with a comprehensive installation, maintenance and servicing support for all Fire & Security Systems. We regularly offer takeover and upgrade contracts for new non-CSS

customer systems. We are the largest independent security systems business in Scotland, a family business established in 1986. CSS can supply cutting-edge technology, proven to improve the overall security of your business supported with over 75 engineers.

NSI GOLD APPROVED ARC



GLASGOW-EDINBURGH-STIRLING-WHITBURN-FIFE-ABERDEEN

Latest figures suggest theft going out the front door of retail businesses is no less than 3% of turnover, and often much higher. As the cost-of-living crisis continues, there is an element of society that are turning to theft who would previously never have considered doing so before. CSS delivers the latest technology, with local expert advice, which can quickly repay the investment in improved security systems. Reducing stock loss and supporting staff at work are our prime objectives.

New technologies act as a visible deterrent against future crime in stores and supports staff morale, whilst helping retailers save on money lost from theft in time to come. Sensormatic tagging – Ai CCTV – Self Service Check-out Guardian Angel Monitoring – DisMist Protection

Retailers may be reluctant to invest in new security technologies but experience shows that it is a long-term investment that reaps rewards if the right quality of equipment and service is chosen.

Retail shrink accounts for over \$100billion in direct losses worldwide. This number has been growing rapidly in the past months. Groceries, with easily concealed but relatively high value, everyday use products such as gourmet food, razor blades and batteries remain the primary targets for thieves. To maintain profitability without compromising the shopper's in-store experience.

For retail stores, recent advances in several technologies should be reviewed such as: integrated Electronic Article Surveillance (EAS) solutions including tags and labels, as well as Computer Vision Analytics and Advanced Video Systems.

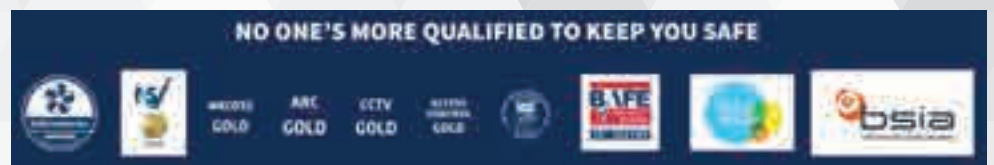
The CSS DisMist System for Businesses:

Intruders to your property are repelled by a dense mist which instantly obscures their vision and forces them back through their point of entry. The "CSS Intruder Dis-Mist System" can repel an intruder long enough to protect stock or personal belongings until the police service are able to attend the scene.

OVER 160 STAFF INCLUDING 75 ENGINEERS



THE CSS DISMIST SYSTEM YOUTUBE VIDEO



- FIRE SIGNAGE & EXTINGUISHERS
- INTRUDER DIS-MIST SYSTEMS
- REMOTE MONITORING
- TAKEOVERS & UPGRADES
- INTRUDER DETECTION SYSTEMS
- CCTV & VSS SURVEILLANCE
- ACCESS CONTROL & DOOR ENTRY
- FIRE DETECTION & ALARM SYSTEMS
- ALL ELECTRICAL WORK
- EV CHARGERS
- RETAIL TAGGING SYSTEMS
- URC/KNX HOME AUTOMATION

VIOLENCE AND VERBAL ABUSE

Outlined below are the top three triggers for violence and aggression in-store.

Managing and preventing these circumstances will help you and your staff to avoid abuse in-store.



AGE RESTRICTED SALES - ABUSE AT THE TILL

Making sure that staff challenge customers for the sale of age restricted products such as alcohol and tobacco is imperative but can often lead to confrontation.

Ensure that you have clear signage in-store explaining your policy and that staff enforce this consistently. Make sure that your staff are trained to manage difficult customers and can clearly explain your store policy.



REFUSING TO SERVE INTOXICATED PERSONS

Retailers are legally obligated to refuse an alcohol sale to an intoxicated person. One way to avoid personal abuse, is to make clear to the customer that it is not your decision, but the rules applied to your licence.



CUSTOMER SERVICE

Queuing is a frustration for customers and sometimes acts as a trigger for abuse.

Maintaining good staffing levels will prevent customers becoming frustrated and ensure that your staff have support in-store if they need it.

TOP TIPS

- 1 Make sure your staff are aware of the triggers of abuse and are trained to deal with difficult customers.
- 2 Have a clear policy for reporting abuse by customers internally and externally to the police.

CYBER SECURITY: IS YOUR BUSINESS READY?

PHISHING

Phishing is a process of hacking whereby attackers attempt to trick users into clicking a suspicious link or providing sensitive data which is usually done through an email.

1. What is it? Phishing is when users are encouraged to click a bad link that will download malware, or direct them to a suspicious website. It can also be conducted via a text message, social media, or by phone.
2. What are the risks? When a user opens up a phishing email and clicks on a link within it can install malware (such as ransomware), sabotage systems, or steal intellectual property and money.
3. I have received a suspicious email? If you suspect that you have received a phishing e-mail, contact your IT department or Managed Service Provider if your IT service is out-sourced and send the e-mail as an attachment – do not open any links within the e-mail. Alternatively forward the email to **report@phishing.gov.uk** and the URL will be taken down.

WHAT IS BUSINESS EMAIL COMPROMISE?

Business email compromise (or BEC) is a form of phishing attack where a criminal attempts to trick a senior executive (or budget holder) into transferring funds, or revealing sensitive information.

The criminals behind BEC send convincing-looking emails that might request unusual payments, or contain links to 'dodgy' websites. Some emails may contain viruses disguised as harmless attachments, which are activated when opened.

Unlike standard phishing emails that are sent out indiscriminately to millions of people, BEC attacks are crafted to appeal to specific individuals, and can be even harder to detect. BEC is a threat to all organisations of all sizes and across all sectors, including non-profit organisations and government.



PASSWORDS

When used correctly, passwords are a free and efficient way to keep your data secure and prevent unauthorised access to your information.

1. Change ALL default passwords. Many IT systems come preset with passwords. Ensure these are changed prior to restricted data being input.
2. Avoid predictable passwords. Use three random words, interlaced with numbers and symbols. Avoid using your own name, the premises name or the word password.
3. When available, use 2-step verification (2SV). This provides additional security measures for your data. Usually, a code is sent to a smart phone or other device that is used along with your password to give you access.

UPDATES

It is much harder for attackers to break into up-to-date software.

Updates are free and easy to install.

Installing updates is the easiest thing you can do to keep yourself safe.



For further guidance please visit this link:

www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/small-business-guide

Get a free personalised action plan that lists what your organisation can do right now to protect against cyberattack

www.ncsc.gov.uk/cyberaware/actionplan

CYBER SECURITY: IS YOUR BUSINESS READY?



Technologies are advancing faster than ever before. The impact of Covid forced many retailers to start trading online, some, earlier than they had planned. We are now living in a virtually contactless world where everyone can select, pay for and receive goods in the touch of a button.

But are you ready for these advancements? Do you have the correct procedures in place? Are you doing everything you can to protect your business from a cyber-attack? Do you do enough to protect your customers' data?

The following advice will not necessarily prevent you from being a victim of a Cybercrime, however, it may protect your business enough to prevent huge financial or unrecoverable reputational damage.

BACK UP YOUR DATA

1. What do you consider essential data? What could your business not function without? (Suppliers details, invoices, banking, customer accounts, stock levels etc) This essential data is what you need to back up.
2. Keep your backed up data away from the original source. Follow the 3-2-1 rule. There should be three copies of data, on 2 different mediums, and 1 off site. We recommend a copy to the network, a copy to the cloud and a copy to an independent, encrypted device such as a removable hard drive or flash drive.
3. Back up regularly, this will ensure you have the most up to date information stored in the event of having to re-establish your systems following a cyber-attack.

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SGF has developed this document to support retailers assess and manage the crime threat their businesses face.

Every local shop is different and so too are the challenges they face from crime, but we have developed a package of guidance to act as a starting point for retailers to assess the risks they face. The guide includes details on triggers for violence and abuse, robbery and case studies on the brutal reality of retail crime.

CYBER SECURITY: IS YOUR BUSINESS READY?

Do you have the correct procedures in place? Are you doing everything you can to protect your business from a cyber-attack? Do you do enough to protect your customer's data?

VIOLENCE AND VERBAL ABUSE

This section focuses on the triggers for abuse that could result in violence and verbal abuse towards retailers and staff.

ROBBERY

This section supports retailers and staff to focus on gathering evidence to support police in following up on an incident of robbery.

RETAIL CRIME: THE BRUTAL REALITY

Concerning accounts of retail crime incidents across Scotland, often involving violent assaults.



THE SCOTTISH SAFER BUSINESS GUIDE

2025/26

