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RETAIL CRIME TASKFORCE

JANUARY 2026 - 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

Welcome Message



PI Emma Wright

Emma Wright

Police Inspector | Retail Crime Taskforce

Welcome to our first issue of 2026. This is our fourth publication, as we now move into the last quarter of a whirlwind first year for the Retail Crime Taskforce (RCTF). The past two months will have undoubtedly been a busy time for retailers and likewise the Taskforce have working hard to support you during this time.

Hopefully you have caught our Crimestoppers Retail Crime Campaign and Festive Retail Crime advice and information in the news and Social Media. In addition, we were proud to support the National Business Crime Centre (NBCC), USDAW and the Scottish Retail Consortium in the National Shopkind Campaign – which is uniting the retail sector to tackle violence and abuse against shopworkers by asking people to ShopKind when in stores.

The big news for this issue is confirmation of continued funding for Retail Crime in the Scottish Budget and Comprehensive Spending Review. On Wednesday 14th January, we were pleased to hear the announcement that Police Scotland would receive a further £9million in funding for the next three financial years. This maintains the investment we received in our first year with £3million each year until the end of March 2029. We are delighted to be able to continue the work of the Taskforce and are grateful for the significant support received from retailers to achieve this.

We are now working to consult with colleagues and stakeholders on what has worked in year one to finalise our plans and structure for the coming year. We are very keen for you to have your say in this and are circulating a Retailer Survey within this issue to gain your feedback on the Taskforce. Read on for more details and please take a moment to complete the survey.

Alongside our planning for year two, we will be getting back out to engage with you in the coming months, with our first significant event of 2026 being the Scottish Grocers Federation (SGF) Crime Seminar in Edinburgh on 12th February. We are pleased to have a speaker slot on the Agenda along with an exhibitor stand where you can come and engage with the Taskforce. Please pop along to speak to us and learn more about what we can offer to support you. For those who can't make it, there will also be information on the Taskforce work in the SGF annual publication, which is released on the same date.

I am pleased to share some updates with you in this issue on what we have been doing and how some key pieces of work are progressing. We hope to continue the momentum throughout 2026, continuing in our aim to provide a visible and measurable impact on retail crime.

Have Your Say

RCTF Retailer Survey Launches



The Taskforce is seeking your views on what we have delivered in year one and your experience of our support. We are launching a short survey on Monday 2nd February 2026, which will conclude on Friday 20th February. Your feedback will help us evaluate our activity to date and mould what our future activity will look like.

You can access the survey from the QR code above and it can be completed via any device. It should take only a few minutes to complete and is an important opportunity for you to make your voice heard. The survey is open to everyone in the retail sector, from CEOs to shopfloor, security and loss prevention teams, and key stakeholders whom we work in partnership with.

To accompany the survey, we have produced an infographic summary (following page) on what the Taskforce is and what we do. We are pleased to share this with you and encourage you to share the QR code and infographic far and wide to colleagues in the retail sector.

The Team

The Retail Crime Taskforce has a range of personnel, including uniformed officers, detectives, intelligence officers, analysts, and architectural liaison officers (retail crime prevention officers).

Aim

Provide a visible and measurable impact on retail crime.

4Ps Approach



PREVENT

Stop people becoming the perpetrators of retail crime



PROTECT

Strengthen the collective protection against retail crime



PURSUE

Stop retail crime by bringing perpetrators to justice



PREPARE

Mitigate against the impact of retail crime

Functions

Central hub for oversight, analysis development and co-ordination of Retail Crime, in support of Local Policing Divisions.

Identification, development and dissemination of guidance and good practice.

Provision of analytical and crime reduction products to enhance local responses.

Development of prevent strategies and interventions.

Identification, development and tasking of linked crimes, high harm offenders and Organised Retail Crime Groups (ORCGs).

How We Can Help You

- Resources for your store and staff – leaflets and posters with advice and information.
- Providing training on Conflict Resolution and Retail Crime Prevention.
- Conducting a Crime Prevention Survey to give bespoke advice on how to target harden.
- Links with local community officers who can provide a response to issues and support you with retail crime initiatives.

How You Can Get Involved

- Join our Joint Retailer Forum and help shape the response to Retail Crime, get useful information, and make useful links.
- Sign up for our Bi-Monthly Retailer Bulletin.
- Sign up to Retail Watch for your local area to receive alerts and advice.
- Share information with us about prolific offenders and where stolen goods are being sold on.

Get Involved by contacting us directly and follow our social media updates:

#retailcrimetaskforce #notavictimlesscrime

 **SCDRetailCrimeTaskForce@scotland.police.uk**

PREVENTION



Spotlight on RCTF Protect

“Strengthen the collective protection against retail crime”

Our Protect Team is led by Police Sergeant Peter Milne and consists of Kevin Chase and Constables Bruce Heron and Stevie Black. A key part of their work has been developing two inputs for delivery to retailers. The first is on Conflict Resolution and provides retailers and staff with key information on how to stay safe and manage confrontational behaviour from the public. The second is all about Retail Crime Prevention – with top tips on how to make your store a more hostile environment to retail criminals and some tactical options that are proven to work in retail settings.

In addition to direct delivery of these inputs to retailers and staff, the Team have developed a “Train the Trainer” package for frontline officers in Prevention and Partnerships, Community Policing and City Centre Policing Teams. This equips them with increased knowledge of retail crime tactics and trends, along with resources available to them to support their work in both prevention and investigation. They will then be ready to go out and deliver the packages to retailers and staff in their local areas.

Sergeant Peter Milne explains, “The team have been amazing in raising awareness of these inputs. Their persistence to secure the valuable time of retailers and frontline officers, and their flexibility to go and deliver these inputs has been excellent. In addition, the product they are delivering is obviously hitting the mark and the demand for return custom is extremely high.”



PCs Stevie Black and Bruce Heron out and about delivering Retail Crime Prevention Advice

To date, the team have delivered Train the Trainer inputs in eight of our 13 local policing divisions and around 79 police officers have received the input.

Feedback has been extremely positive with all seeking dates to train further officers. The team have a full diary for the coming months with several inputs across various policing areas.



Following a recent input to officers at Kirkcaldy, Police Sergeant Judson Howie, commented, "Bruce and Stevie were extremely knowledgeable and brought good experience from their previous and current roles to assist us. We really enjoyed the inputs and now have useful resources to visit our shops. The Conflict Resolution input will be helpful, as I am always asked about that. Great work by the team, who are welcome anytime."

In addition, it is estimated the team have completed over 100 engagements with stores since August 2025 for either delivery of the Conflict Resolution or Crime Prevention Inputs, or to support stores by undertaking Crime Prevention Surveys. We have several engagements planned, including invitations to present at management conferences held by major retailers and the Scottish Grocers Federation, whilst continuing to engage local retailers to provide guidance and support. We are working hard to garner relationships with small and independent retailers, with a view to holding an online seminar, which will allow these retailers to share their views and allow the RCTF to deliver inputs on Conflict Resolution and Crime Prevention.





Spotlight on RCTF Prevent

“Stop people becoming perpetrators of retail crime”

Under the Prevent Strand the team have been exploring a number of services and initiatives available to divert offenders from retail crime. There is some exciting work ongoing to introduce new and expand existing schemes to provide bespoke diversions for retail crime offenders. Recognising the various drivers for retail crime and the high prevalence of problematic substance use and vulnerability, as underlying causes, it is essential we consider effective diversions, alongside bringing offenders to justice.

The following case study is an example of a programme that the team have been working with and supported to achieve further funding via the RCTF.

Dumfries and Galloway Youth Engagement Pathways

The Youth Engagement Pathways (YEP) project, a joint initiative between Dumfries Community Police team and Youth Justice Services, was formally established in Dumfries in September 2024, following a successful pilot. The program aims to divert young people away from offending behaviour by providing targeted, bespoke support.

The YEP's approach is based on proactive engagement and targeted intervention. YEP jointly identify youths involved in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) through data analysis and community intelligence. Once engaged, the team establish rapport, conduct initial assessments, and develop personalised intervention plans. This is followed by regular joint meetings with the youths and their families to set clear expectations.

The initial pilot from May to September 2024 saw a 62% reduction in ASB in the targeted area. Furthermore, this has contributed to the 23% decrease in youth offending across Dumfries and Galloway in 2025. While this downward trend is the result of multi-agency efforts, the project's impact is evident; Dumfries town alone saw 128 fewer youths involved in offending behaviours compared to the previous year.



The RCTF noted the exceptional work being carried out, the effectiveness of the approach, and how it could be applied to youths engaged in retail crime. RCTF are now providing additional support and funding to this programme, which will enable them to expand, gain further reach and enhance the support available.

Sergeant Callum Dalgleish-Little of the Community Policing team in Dumfries is a key partner in the YEP and said, "Collaboration with the RCTF will allow YEP to prioritise and scale this proven approach and engage those responsible for retail offences; directly improving safety for retailers and the wider community, whilst ensuring the best outcomes for the children and young people engaged with the pathway"

CASE STUDY – Child 1 & 2

These young people were identified due to displaying harmful behaviours in retail parks, including acts of violence. Their behaviour caused significant unrest in the community. One-to-one meetings identified neurodiversity, learning difficulties, and environmental stress factors.

Youth Justice has since worked closely with education to provide support, and a Community Policing officer mentors the children during a bi-weekly athletics session. The children are supported to engage with various diversionary activities. Since joining the YEP, there has been a 90% reduction in their offending behaviours. Whilst it is early days, the success to date, suggests their time on the project will continue to have a lasting positive impact. Through the RCTF support, both individuals are now enrolled in a tailored six-week bouldering program. This initiative combines physical activity with targeted prevention sessions focused on retail crime and ASB.

Notably, both participants have maintained a 100% attendance record and have had no further contact with the police since the bouldering program began.

If you want further information or would like to request support from the Prevent and Protect Team, please contact them at SCDRetailCrimeTaskForcePrevent@scotland.police.uk



Direct Reporting: A Digital Leap Forward

Since early December, Police Scotland has opened up the ability for a limited number of retailers to report 'Theft by shoplifting' offences directly via the Police Scotland website. We are pleased to report that the uptake has been immediate and effective, with over 500 crime reports received through this new channel to date.

Based on this success, we are moving to expand access to this web-based reporting tool to more retailers in the coming weeks.

Game-Changing Partnerships: We know that administrative time is a burden on your business. Currently, many of you record incidents on third-party crime management platforms and then have to contact Police Scotland separately to report this crime.

To solve this, the Retail Crime Taskforce is excited to announce upcoming partnerships with several leading crime management platforms.

We recognise that a huge number of retail stores already use these third-party systems every day. We are currently working on technical developments that will allow you to report crimes to Police Scotland directly through the platforms you already use.

What this means for your business:

- **No Double Keying:** You will no longer need to record the theft on your third party system and then contact Police Scotland separately. The partnership will allow the details of the crime to be transferred to Police in a few clicks.
- **Efficiency:** This streamlines the transfer of evidence (including statements) and intelligence, getting your staff back to the shop floor faster.

Timeline development within these platforms is already ongoing. We aim to bring these integrations online by spring 2026.

Your Taskforce in Action

Recent Successes in Pursuing Prolific Retail Criminals

Nationwide Manhunt: £250k Fraudster Jailed After Cross-Border Operation Stops Travelling Criminal in his Tracks

The RCTF has played a key role in dismantling a major one-man crime wave that cost UK retailers over a quarter of a million pounds.

Between December 2024 and July 2025, retailers across Scotland were targeted by an offender suspected of committing six high-value frauds and a robbery. In Scotland alone, businesses suffered losses of more than £20,000.

However, it soon became clear this was part of a much bigger picture. This individual travelled extensively across the UK, using specialist equipment and inside knowledge to exploit vulnerabilities in store security. He relied on moving between different police force areas to avoid detection.

The RCTF teamed up with the Opal Organised Retail Crime team, the Metropolitan Police, and West Midlands Police to connect the dots. By sharing intelligence and tracking his evolving methods, the teams were able to monitor his movements.

The intelligence work paid off. A dedicated manhunt team, led by the Met Police, tracked the offender down and arrested him near City of London Airport.

The investigation revealed that in just 12 months, his total offending across the UK amounted to over £250,000.

The offender pled guilty to two counts of Conspiracy to Commit Fraud by False Representation. He has been sentenced to 6 years and 9 months in prison for his crimes in England and Wales. This isn't the end of the road—he is still due to appear in court for his offending in Scotland.



Female Awaits Sentence for Vicious Assault on Retail Worker in Glasgow

Over a two week period a 35 year old female from Glasgow, committed six Theft by Shoplifting offences, one retail worker assault and a number of other non-retail offences. The assault on the retail worker was despicable with the victim being injured as a result of the levels of violence used.

The following morning, Greater Glasgow RCTF were made aware of the assault and within five hours the female was arrested and charged with all the offences outlined. She appeared at court from custody the next day where she pled guilty to the assault along with a number of other charges and was remanded in custody.

Sergeant Andy Muir from Glasgow's RCTF said:

"These incidents had both a financial impact on the stores affected and in one case, a physical and emotional impact on the retail worker who was attacked. Taskforce resources investigated and apprehended the offender and she was brought before the courts. Her conviction should serve as a clear message that shop thefts and the assault of retail workers will not be tolerated, and we will use all resources at our disposal to bring those responsible to justice."

Anyone with information can report it to us via 101 or 100% anonymously to independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or visit [Crimestoppers website](https://www.crimestoppers.co.uk)

Edinburgh Success: Prolific Offender Banned from Stores

Our Edinburgh RCTF has secured a significant victory for local stores proving that persistent reporting leads to real results.

On 9th December 2025, a 34-year-old male from Edinburgh's Southside was convicted of multiple counts of theft by shoplifting and abuse towards retail workers. Because of the scale of his offending, he was granted a Post-Conviction Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO).

This order legally prohibits him from entering the specific retail outlets he has been targeting for the next two years. This individual was not just an occasional shoplifter. In just six months, he racked up over 50 charges for retail crime. Living close to the stores, he targeted them relentlessly. However, the 50 charges were just the tip of the iceberg. Store managers estimated that the majority of his thefts went unreported. In just two stores, it is estimated he stole over £8,000 worth of stock in seven months.

The court heard evidence on how this behaviour affects you, the staff on the shop floor. It wasn't just about the money; it was about the daily grind of dealing with him:

- Staff were constantly "on edge," wondering when he would appear next. His presence was disruptive and created a heavy psychological burden on the team.
- The massive loss of stock hit the stores' bottom lines, leading to reduced sales figures, cut staffing hours, and lost bonus income for hard-working colleagues.
- Staff were forced to act as security guards, spending their shifts watching the door rather than serving customers. This was impossible for smaller stores with fewer staff.
- Stores had to invest in extra security guards, body-worn cameras, and CCTV just to cope with this one individual.

Police Constable Adam Stephenson of the Edinburgh RCTF welcomed the two-year ban: "The conviction provides a positive result for retailers. It is particularly pleasing to see the court granting the Post-Conviction ASBO, which will provide respite and comfort to retailers, knowing that there is an order in place prohibiting him from entering the stores he has been targeting. Management at both stores have expressed their satisfaction with the conclusion of the case and the granting of the order."

This case demonstrates that when police and retailers work together to build a clear picture of offending, we can secure orders that make your workplace safer.

Your Taskforce Results

Wider Results

We have been working hard to collate data on the results of RCTF-initiated activity. We now collate all data on the activity of our Central Team and our Divisional RCTF teams, along with results from a number of the RCTF Funding Bids given to local Divisions for Retail Crime initiatives. The positive impact the Retail Crime Taskforce is making is obvious from this data.

Headline Achievements (to 15th January 2026)

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.

3,671 Shoplifting Charges/Detections

508 Retail Worker Offence Charges

2,100 Suspects Identified by RCTF

233 Electronic Briefings Disseminated

1,060 Intelligence Logs Submitted

807 Arrests Made

38 Organised Crime Groups Identified

82 Disruptions Against OCGs

In total the RCTF have now recorded **over 10,600 results** across all of our KPI recorded activities.

Retailer Feedback

From our engagement with retailers at events, via direct partnership working and via our Joint Retailer Forum, we are hearing positive feedback on the difference the Taskforce is making to you. With extended funding secured we are pleased we can continue this work throughout 2026 and beyond.



Summary Case Management to be used for Theft by Shoplifting Cases

Summary Case Management (SCM) is a process that aims to resolve cases earlier and secure better outcomes for victims. Key evidence is provided when Police submit their Standard Prosecution Report (SPR) to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) and is then disclosed to the defence at the start of the Court process. In some cases, this can lead to earlier guilty pleas minimising the number of officers, victims and witnesses being cited to attend court for trials.

SCM has been being used for domestic abuse cases and has already had a positive effect with an average reduction in first issue police witness citations of 42% and recite police witness citations by 49%.

Following a successful shoplifting pilot in Tayside, from December 2025 SCM is now being used to resolve Theft by Shoplifting (TSL) cases through early provision of key evidential material, notably video footage.

Dundee TSL Initiative

The Dundee TSL pilot required officers to submit any CCTV footage capturing the offence in whole or in part alongside the SPR when reporting theft by shoplifting cases.

This enabled the COPFS to make more informed decisions at case marking, facilitated earlier disclosure to the defence, and reduced unnecessary requests for evidential material.

The pilot demonstrated a strong link between officers listing the CCTV footage as key evidence within the SPR and the likelihood of resolution at first appearance. The five-month pilot found that 48% of cases were resolved at first calling when CCTV was available and listed as key evidence.

What are the benefits?

This process can benefit police and retailers alike, in the following ways:

- Increasing the proportion of cases resolved at first calling
- Reduction in continued hearings and improved efficiency
- Fewer witness citations for officers, as well as victims and witnesses

DESC Reminder to Retailers

The timely provision of CCTV evidence to police is key to the success of SCM (as detailed in the above article).

Digital Evidence Sharing Capability (DESC) is now being used across the criminal justice sector and is revolutionising the way we collect and process digital evidence throughout the criminal justice system.

The unified platform allows police officers, prosecutors, defence lawyers, court staff and judges to access a secure system to collect, store, process and manage evidence digitally. The objective is to modernise and streamline the justice process, ultimately achieving faster and more effective case resolution.

By supporting the use of DESC, retailers strengthen their capacity to prevent loss, accelerate police investigations and protect their customers and workforce.

You can read more about DESC on the Police Scotland website at the following QR Code:



Joint Retailer Forum

The Joint Retailer Forum (JRF) is a monthly meeting for retailers to engage directly with the RCTF. The meeting is open to all retailers, with the best person to attend being someone involved in security and loss prevention on behalf of your business.

This month's JRF took place on Wednesday 21st January and was attended by representatives from a host of major retailers, retail consortiums and stakeholders. They were updated on continued funding for the RCTF and the planning process for next year, including our Retailer Survey. The meeting received updates from most of the Divisional RCTF teams on what they have been doing since establishing/growing in that latter part of 2025. There was also an update on Op Dynos and Direct Reporting. Healthy debate followed, with the chance for questions and for retailers to air their views and raise suggestions.

We are keen to grow our membership and want you to get involved. You don't have to make the meeting every month but attending when you can, is a good chance to engage with the RCTF and work collaboratively with us to tackle Retail Crime.

If you are interested in joining the JRF then please contact us at:
SCDRetailCrimeTaskforce@scotland.police.uk

In The News

Our work continues to gain 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



Maxine Fraser Retirement

On Wednesday 14th January, members of the Taskforce were pleased to join Police Scotland ACC Tim Mairs in a lunch hosted to mark the retirement of Maxine Fraser as Managing Director of Retailer's Against Crime (RAC). Maxine has been a pioneer in tackling retail crime since joining RAC in 1998. She has led the way for collaborative working between retailers, police, and partner agencies in leading the Business Crime Reduction Partnership, to deliver effective intelligence sharing, crime prevention, education, and awareness of retail crime issues.

Maxine will be sorely missed but hands over leadership of RAC to Stephanie Karte, who also came along to the celebration at Scottish Police College Tulliallan. It was a fantastic opportunity for policing to recognise Maxine's significant contribution and wish her a well-earned retirement. The event came the day after continued funding for the Taskforce was announced, and it seemed a timely achievement, that is in no small part linked to Maxine championing the cause for investment in this area of policing for many years. We wish Maxine all the best for her new chapter and look forward to a continued close working relationship with RAC under Stephanie's direction.



Maxine delivers at her final RAC Conference in November 2025

Watch this SPACE



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

- RCTF work with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) – we are working in collaboration with COPFS to tackle Retail Crime. We are focussing work on how we effectively deal with the highest harm offenders and the tools available to us. We hope to run a feature on our progress in a future issue.
- Year End Results and Year Two Plans – expect an update on our achievements at the end of Year One and our plans for Year Two in the next issue.
- Update on Op Dynos and Tackling Youth Involvement in Retail Crime – updates on significant work by the team to disrupt organised child criminal exploitation and plans for continuation of the model.



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