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# RETAIL CRIME TASKFORCE

**NOVEMBER 2025 - RETAILER BULLETIN**



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## Contact Us

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

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

# Welcome Message

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PI Emma Wright

## Emma Wright

Police Inspector | Retail Crime Taskforce

Welcome to our Festive Edition of the Retailer Bulletin. This is our third publication, as we now move into our eighth month of operation in the Retail Crime Taskforce (RCTF). The last two months has seen a busy period for the Taskforce, with further expansion and lots of exciting collaborative working going on.

October saw the Team working hard with delivery of our six-month milestone communications, alongside which we delivered internal intranet pages to help spread good practice and guidance relating to tackling Retail Crime with colleagues across Police Scotland.

This includes information on the highest harm offenders in each local area, so our teams know who they should focus on and guidance on how they should approach those causing the most harm, so we can maximise criminal justice outcomes and put in place preventative measures and conditions to stop re-offending.

The team have also been learning more and taking onboard innovative ideas from across the UK, via attendance at Retail Risk Leicester 2025 and observing the Metropolitan Police's approach to tackling Retail Crime under their Operation Zoridon Days of Action.

October also saw expansion of our staffing footprint into three new Divisions and increased resources across Edinburgh and Glasgow – read more about this within this issue. We hosted a Team Day, with colleagues coming together at Dalmarnock and others joining virtually, where we set out our strategy and plan for the remaining six months of this year and welcomed the new teams.

During November we have been collaborating with our Digital Evidence Sharing Capability (DESC) colleagues to develop materials that will help retailers understand the benefits of adopting DESC to provide CCTV evidence to Police.

We have also been collaborating with Crimestoppers to produce a Retail Crime Campaign to change behaviour and attitudes, along with a call for information on those responsible for Retail Crime and the onward sale of stolen retail goods.





Finally, we have been collaborating with Retailers Against Crime, both to deliver results against a broad spectrum of Retail Crime and to begin developing some new educational resources to address rising youth involvement in Retail Crime.

We look forward to attending their Annual Conference at the end of this month, where we will be presenting and exhibiting. We look forward to meeting a number of you there to tell you more about what we have been doing. As we move into December we will see a busy period for you all.

We are hoping to help you have a Retail Crime-Free Christmas, with our Festive Social Media advice and awareness posts, along with a number of Festive Operations taking place across all Divisions, which will see both prevention and enforcement taking place. Wishing you all a prosperous festive period and a Happy New Year from the RCTF!

## DIGITAL EVIDENCE SHARING CAPABILITY (DESC)



DESC, revolutionising the way we collect and process evidence.

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.

When evidence can be shared quickly, investigations move faster and repeat offenders are identified sooner. DESC, along with other criminal justice led initiatives will increase the likelihood of successful case outcomes by ensuring critical information gets to the right people quickly.

# DESC and Retail Crime



The DESC team is working with the Retail Crime Taskforce to help them meet their objective of making a visible and measurable impact on retail crime and bringing perpetrators to justice.

By uploading and certifying CCTV evidence directly to the police through DESC, it speeds up the investigation process, identification of offenders, and helps cases move to resolution faster. This often results in fewer court hearings and citations for those who witnessed the incident.

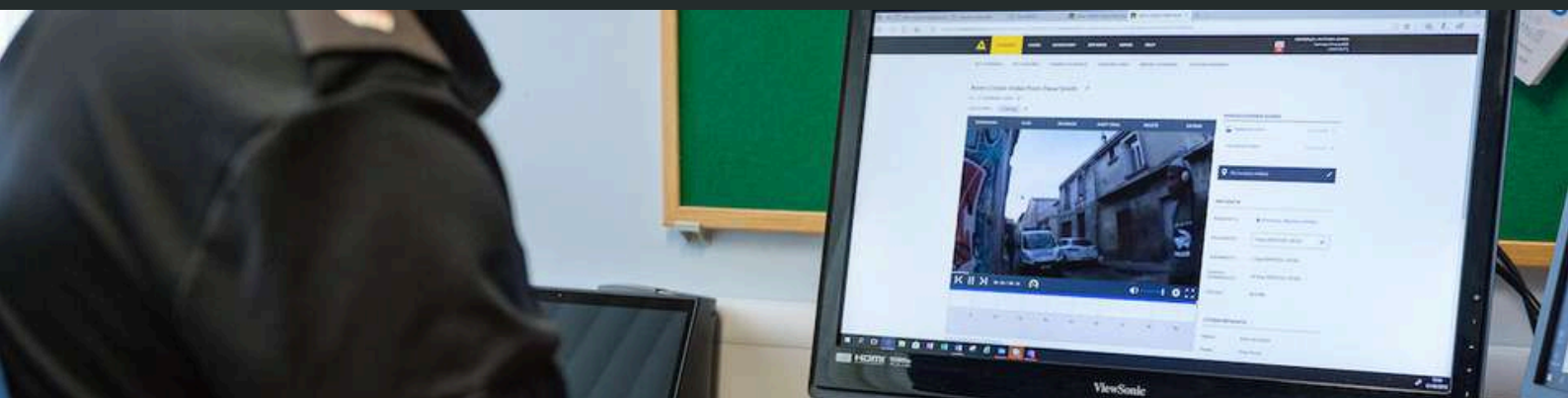
Evidence can be uploaded at a time convenient to the retailer and may remove the need for the police to physically attend to collect the footage. Local Authority organisations have found this to be particularly beneficial as appointments offered did not always align with their staff's availability or operating hours.

## What type of evidence is suitable for DESC?

- Multimedia – video, audio and images
- CCTV – public, private and business including 'Ring doorbell' solutions
- Dashcam footage
- Mobile phone capture – videos, image, screen and audio recordings
- Police Scotland 999/101 call recordings
- Police custody CCTV
- Police mobile images

There may, on occasion, be instances where file types or formats are not accepted by DESC. This is usually due to technology advancements and software updates. We will manage these instances by exception. The supplier of DESC continuously updates the list of accepted file types.

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 (scan QR code above).



# Spotlight on RCTF Expansion into North East, Tayside and Fife Divisions

During October 2025, we have increased the RCTF footprint in Edinburgh and Glasgow and delivered dedicated teams into three new Divisional Areas. This has been made possible by utilising the funding made available to Police Scotland during 2024-25 financial year by Scottish Government. Read on to find out where our Teams are now operating and how they are already making an impact on Retail Crime.



## North-East RCTF

PS Chris Chapman, from the Community Action Team in Aberdeen, leads three officers on the North East RCTF (A Division).

The officers concentrate on reviewing all reported theft by shoplifting offences and ensuring that offences are linked together and promptly reported to the COPFS to speed up the judicial process; increasing the chances of an early plea by repeat offenders and seeking preventative orders such as CrASBOs (post conviction Anti-Social Behaviour Orders) to prevent re-offending.

The team's activity is complemented by the support of the wider Community Action Team who undertook some Days of Action on 19/20 November, with increased officers on patrols. This resulted in approximately 66 direct engagements with retailers for crime prevention advice, the arrest of three Retail Crime offenders for a total of eight apprehension warrants, along with three applications for CrASBOs made.





# Spotlight on RCTF Expansion into North East, Tayside and Fife Divisions

## Tayside RCTF

DS David Feeney, from Dundee CID's Serious and Organised Crime Team, leads three officers who form the Tayside RCTF (D Division). The team are proactively targeting those Retail Crime offenders causing the most harm across the area, including leading on a RCTF investigation involving a travelling retail crime group operating across Tayside and other areas of Scotland. The Team carried out Days of Action across Perth and Kinross on 10/11 October. The operation resulted in engagement with several retailers, two arrests, four offenders cautioned, charged and reported, and a further four shoplifting offences detected. A number of proactive stop and searches resulted in the recovery of stolen retail goods.

The team have continued their positive start by working with a number of retailers directly with regards to problematic offenders and heavily targeted stores. They have also been instrumental in a number of proactive stops for organised retail criminals resulting in recovery of property and significant arrests.

## Fife RCTF

PI Colin Potter, from Fife Division's Divisional Co-ordination Unit at Glenrothes, is responsible for the Fife RCTF. The team consists of three officers who act as divisional Retail Crime SPOCs for each of the three sub-divisions (in P Division). P Division have led the way with a Proof-of-Concept Pilot of Direct Reporting of Retail Crime, working with SentrySIS. The Fife RCTF SPOCs compliment this approach by collating shoplifting offences for their respective areas leading to improved detection rates and more effective criminal justice outcomes, particularly for repeat and organised retail crime suspects.

We look forward to seeing how the new teams develop and continue to achieve great results against Retail Crime in your areas.

# Crimestoppers Police Scotland Retail Crime Campaign

On Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November Crimestoppers launched a Police Scotland Retail Crime Campaign. The Campaign will run for three weeks in the build up to the busy festive period for retailers. The aim of the Campaign is to highlight that Retail Crime is not victimless and how it affects us all, to encourage a change in attitudes and behaviour towards shop theft and offences against retail workers. It also seeks information about those responsible for Retail Crime and the onward sale of stolen retail goods.



The Taskforce have worked closely with Crimestoppers to develop assets for the Campaign to educate on the impact Retail Crime has on retail workers and to highlight that in Scotland there is specific legislation to protect shop workers.

There is also messaging on how a significant proportion of Retail Crime is now committed by Organised Retail Crime Groups, who often exploit the vulnerable to steal products for them to sell on for financial gain.

The Taskforce estimates that at least one third of all Retail Crime is being committed by serious and organised retail criminals. The Campaign highlights the impact of Retail Crime on everyone, in terms of the economy, retailers, staff and shoppers. We know that Retail Crime causes shoppers to feel less safe when they visit their local towns and cities. In addition, the impact on retailers in terms of losses, can also lead to increased prices for shoppers, job losses for staff and for some smaller local retailers, the closure of stores. Local shops can provide a lifeline in some communities and as they close and leave empty premises it can lead to a decline in community spaces, with vandalism and anti-social behaviour taking place.





Angela Parker, National Manager of Crimestoppers Scotland said:

“Our charity wants to empower communities and retail staff to pass on information anonymously about WHO is behind, organised shop theft. Your information could help prevent serious abuse and violent incidents and help Scotland’s shop workers feel safer at work. You will never be asked for your name or any personal details, and your information could make a real difference.”

The Campaign launch will be held in Edinburgh on 26<sup>th</sup> November and Glasgow on 27<sup>th</sup> November, with participation from stakeholders such as Scottish Government, the Retail Industry Leaders Group and Retailers Against Crime. There will be a dedicated webpage and printed and social media assets to convey the key messages and call for information.



**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-uk.org)**

# Collaboration with Retailers Against Crime



This edition, as we approach the Retailers Against Crime (RAC) Annual Conference, we are highlighting how our Pursue Team work jointly with RAC and SentrySIS to achieve results against various types of Retail Crime.

## Targeting Organised Retail Criminals

RCTF established details of a high value theft from a RAC partner, from details recorded on SentrySIS. The invaluable information and intelligence included images of the suspects and their vehicle that had not yet been recorded in a crime reports.

The ability to access the images of the suspects and their vehicle enabled the RCTF to identify the suspects relay available intelligence to local resources, resulting in officers locating the vehicle, and arresting the suspects and seizing the vehicle that was being used illegally.

The quick action, that would not have been possible without the support of RAC, resulted in two Organised Retail Crime Group members in custody, the detection of further offences with a total value of goods stolen of more than £17,000 and the removal of a dangerous vehicle from our roads.

## Targeting Organised Retail Fraud

RCTF established details of incidents of fraud by deception targeting RAC partners, recorded on SentrySIS. These incidents had not been reported to Police but with the intelligence available it enabled the RCTF to identify the vehicle used by the suspects. Enquires completed by the RCTF identified the suspects and further linked incidents across the UK, this was disseminated across UK law enforcement.

If it wasn't for the intelligence record by RAC, it would not have been possible to identify the Organised criminals targeting retailers across the UK, as no crimes had been reported to Police Scotland.

## Targeting Counterfeit Currency across Scotland

RCTF established details of incidents of tendering of counterfeit currency across Scotland from a RAC notification linking eight incidents. The suspect images and locations of these incidents (not all reported to Police) facilitated development by the RCTF intelligence unit. From the intelligence recorded on SentrySIS and subsequent development by the RCTF, a total of 30 crimes were identified as committed by an Organised Criminal Group. Working with National law enforcement partners three of the four members of this organised criminal group were identified. The work completed that was instigated from intelligence recorded on SentrySIS but not all reported to Police Scotland, has formed part of a UK wide investigation into the manufacturing and distribution of counterfeit currency.

# Your Taskforce Results

## Wider Results

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We have been working hard to collate data on the results of RCTF-initiated activity. We have now been able to collate all data on the activity of 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 17th 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.

**1794** Shoplifting Charges/Detections  
**363** Retail Worker Offence Charges  
**1169** Suspects Identified by RCTF  
**189** Electronic Briefings Disseminated

**459** Intelligence Logs Submitted  
**343** Arrests Made  
**31** Organised Crime Groups Identified  
**54** 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.

“We have seen some improvement in the targeting of offenders by the Retail Task Force and look forward to seeing some further improvements within the City, with the Assistance of the teams regarding the prolific offenders colleagues deal with on a daily basis. The use of the Retail Workers’ Act has been great in providing support our colleagues in the store.” - **Maggie Oliver, Police & Partnership Manager, North Zone, Sainsburys**

“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**



## RCTF Updates

# Six Month Milestone Communications, Supporting “Freedom From Fear”, and Festive Social Media Campaign.

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### Six Month Milestone Communications

During October 2025, the Taskforce put together an external and internal Media Campaign to highlight the results achieved in our first six months of operation. Hopefully you caught some of the external media coverage, which highlighted our results, the Taskforce approach and thanked stakeholders and retailers for their support in working together with the Taskforce to tackle Retail Crime.

Our internal campaign focussed on sharing our results with colleagues within Police Scotland and raising their awareness of the Taskforce and Retail Crime.

Detective Chief Inspector Jackie Knight from the Retail Crime Taskforce said: “What we’ve seen in the first six months of operational activity is a genuine commitment from local policing divisions to work alongside us to tackle retail crime in their areas. I urge divisional colleagues to continue to liaise with the Retail Crime Taskforce to seek support and assistance with enforcement and crime prevention, but also to help us build the bigger picture of retail crime and more robustly target the main perpetrators.”

Alongside the internal campaign, a new Retail Crime Taskforce Intranet page has been created and contains all necessary information on how the unit can support local policing divisions in tackling retail crime, as well as guidance on matters to consider during a retail crime investigation.

### Supporting “Freedom From Fear”

During November, Police Scotland were pleased to support the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW) with their annual “Freedom From Fear” Campaign. Inspector Emma Wright met with Tony Doonan, Regional Secretary for Scotland, at USDAW’s Glasgow offices, to learn more about their activities to highlight the issue of offences against Retail Workers and their Members Survey Results.

The 2024 Survey found that 8 out of 10 who responded had been verbally abused and 10% had been physically attacked. Abuse and violence were regularly triggered when abusers were caught shoplifting.

Tony interviewed Emma about the work of the Taskforce and learning about what we are doing to tackle offences against Retail Workers, including the new resources we have produced for retailers to display, giving information to staff about the issue, providing advice on how to stay safe and encouraging the reporting of all incidents of abuse and violence.



## Festive Social Media Campaign

Between 1-31 December the Taskforce will be running a Festive Retail Crime Social Media Campaign. The Campaign will include information about and links to our partner materials, such as Crimestoppers, RAC and USDAW. It will highlight the issues surrounding retail crime and how it affects everyone, particularly in the busy Festive Period.

The Campaign will also feature a light-hearted take on Retail Crime prevention advice for Retailers, with lots of Festive Puns and amusing festive themed graphics, as we hope to help you have a "Retail Crime-Free Christmas".

The Taskforce and Divisional colleagues will also be working hard operationally to deliver additional festive patrols and enforcement against Retail Criminals, and we will be regularly posting our results using the following hashtags:

**#RetailCrimeTaskforce**  
**#NotAVictimlessCrime**

We hope you enjoy the humorous posts and wish you all a prosperous Festive period.





# In the news

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

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

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





# 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 over the coming months. Expect updates on the following in coming editions of this Bulletin:

- Direct Reporting – we continue work behind the scenes to move towards a direct reporting solution for retailers. Hear more in our next issue around how this is developing.
- Summary Case Management (SCM) – Police Scotland has introduced SCM as an approach for the quicker resolution of certain crimes, by front-loading cases with the available evidence and encouraging early pleas. This has been trialled for Shoplifting offences and is being rolled out soon.
- Diversion and Education Work – Our Prevent and Protect Team have been engaging with many stakeholders to establish what diversions already exist and also to expand these or develop new initiatives to impact on diversion of retail crime offenders, particularly in the youth space. We will provide some more news on this work in the near future.



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