



Retailers Against Crime CIC  
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## **Retailers Against Crime Impact Statement**

### **History**

Founded in 1997 we are a not-for-profit retail crime partnership based in Stirling, committed to detecting and preventing crime, including acts of violence within our member stores. We are funded solely by our members (retailers) and sponsors. As a Community Interest Company, we provide workshops to the wider community, including educating the younger generation on the effects of crime, investing in their future. RAC also work together in partnership with police forces across the UK sharing relevant intelligence. We represent our members on various forums and work closely with business crime reduction partnerships throughout the UK enabling relevant intelligence to be shared nationally. (RAC Brochure attached)

RAC was founded in 1997 by members of the Oxford Street Association in London. The Oxford Street Association was a partnership of major retailers formed in the mid 1990's to determine if individuals were travelling from store to store to commit retail crime. Information collated from members, proved their suspicions, with further results showing individuals were also travelling to London to commit crime from other parts of the UK. Members of the Association could see the benefit in establishing a national scheme in Scotland, and in 1997 Retailers Against Crime was launched. The initial RAC pilot consisted of 47 stores in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow, and was supported by retailers, the then Scottish Office Crime Prevention Unit and the Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland (ACPOS). Today RAC circulates information to Crime Partnerships and Police throughout the UK and over 1500 stores/premises in RAC areas.

### **How does RAC work**

RAC is registered with the Information Commissioners Office and operates strictly within the Data Protection Act 2018 which includes GDPR. The information received from RAC members is analysed and processed then stored on our secure database. Alerts are raised daily on the most active and/or violent offenders and shared with our members enabling them to recognise who may attempt to commit crime in their premises. Therefore, often deterring the crime before it occurs.

### **Retail Crime is an 'Industry' and is Affecting the Economy**

RAC members' losses are the highest in years and there are no signs of this decreasing.

Our statistics show:

- 37% rise in losses during 2023 compared to 2022 with the actual amount hitting a staggering £1,468,409.00.
- 12567 incidents were reported, analysed and processed by RAC in 2023 which is a 25% rise on incidents reported in 2022.

Included in the above are 1066 incidents which involved violence/assault, verbal abuse, threatening behavior, and possession of an offensive weapon. There is also an increase in youth crime with groups travelling regionally in Scotland.

Our database consists of 44903 active offenders who commit retail crime:

The Retail Crime Survey issued by the British Retail Consortium in February 2024 states that the overall monetary cost of crime, taking into account both actual losses and crime prevention costs, stood at £3.3 billion, up from £1.8 billion the previous year.

This included £1.2 billion for crime prevention, up from £720 million, and £2.15 billion loss to crime

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itself, up from £1.05 billion. £1.8 billion was lost to customer theft (just under £5 million a day) in 16.7 million incidents (45,750 a day) compared with £950 million and just under 8 million incidents the year before. This confirms a rising year-on-year trend.

It is presumed that the cost of retail crime is paid for by increasing prices to the public. However within retail, security is terminated/reduced along with staffing hours to compensate for shop theft. With the reduction of security this results in the compromise of staff safety. In the past store groups would financially support their high stock loss stores with their profitable stores. This has changed in recent years with many store closures as a result of shop theft.

### **Who Persistently Commits Retail Crime Reported to RAC**

- **Local area criminals** are those who have a substance addiction and tend to commit crime local to their home area. Incidents reported account for a smaller proportion of crime reported to RAC. Amount of incident loss reported varies between £10 and £500. The items stolen are normally sold for cash in order to pay for their addiction.
- **Professional Criminals** are those who work on their own or with others and normally travel to commit crime. Many operate in teams. Crime is their 'profession' or 'job' and funds their lifestyle. Amount of incident loss reported varies between £200 and £5000
- **Organised Crime Groups (OCG)** are those who are involved in other criminal activities such as drugs, firearms, protection, modern slavery etc. and therefore linked to organised crime. These OCG are prolific throughout the UK. Largest incident reported was in excess of £47000.

### **Brief Case Studies:**

#### **Local Area Criminal:**

In excess of 62 incidents reported from RAC member stores since January 2023.

Offender known to RAC since 2017.

Incident loss values reported between £10 and £152.

Commits shop theft and offends local to her area.

Noted as violent and has a substance addiction. Resides Edinburgh.

#### **Professional Team Example:**

In excess of 242 incidents reported from RAC member stores since 2013.

Incident loss values reported are between £200 and £5000. Stock previously recovered of £5000 in Manchester and over £1700 of stock recovered from theft in Stirling.

At present RAC records show that 6 individuals are active in this team.

Travel throughout UK to commit crime which includes shop theft and refund fraud.

Use of foil lined bags. Lifestyle funders. Reside Glasgow.

#### **Organised Crime Group Example:**

In excess of 652 incidents reported from RAC member stores since 2018.

Incident loss values reported between £100 and £33K

This group commit high value shop theft and change ringing throughout the UK. In excess of 152 members of this group between 2018 to date. At present RAC records show that 93 members of this team have been active over the past month.

Team members distract staff in store to enable other team members to select and remove stock in bulk. Team use de-taggers to remove security tags from items including foil lined bags to conceal tagged stock within. The foil deflects any signal from the tags and therefore they pass through electronic alarmed system (EAS) undetected. This group are violent, intimidate and threaten staff. Reside Glasgow.

## **The Effect of Crime on RAC Member Store Staff**

Below are concerns raised from our members. RAC can provide further information if required:

- Level of violence and abuse from offenders
- Fear of retribution from offenders
- Non prosecution of offenders
- Staff time spent when detaining offenders
- Staff time spent when attending court as a witness, as offenders often plead prior to court
- Sentences given do not 'work'

Information relating to above is also featured within the Scottish Grocers Federation Annual Report 2024.

### **Notes:**

Professional Criminals and Organised Crime Groups are known to steal to order and use sophisticated methods to dispose of their gains. Both commit the highest proportion of crime reported to RAC.

A high percentage of those reported to RAC are persistent and violent offenders and have many previous convictions. They are often arrested and charged. However, there are little, or no consequences imposed by the courts, therefore the crime continues to escalate. Understandably prison is not the answer for every offender and more early intervention/restorative programmes are required to at least attempt to reduce retail crime and help those with substance abuse problems.

Much of the rise in retail crime is a result of little or no consequences.

In the past successful proceeds of crime cases against members of one team (which RAC provided intelligence for) disrupted the offenders, although they are still actively committing retail crime today.

Signed:



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