

CRIME SURVEY 2022 REPORT



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THE BRC AND RETAIL

The BRC's purpose is to make a positive difference to the retail industry and the customers it serves, today and in the future.

Retail is an exciting, dynamic and diverse industry. It is a driving force in our economy, a hotbed of innovation and the UK's largest private sector employer. Retailers touch the lives of millions of people every day, supporting the vibrancy of the communities in which they operate.

The industry today is going through a period of profound change. Technology is transforming how people shop; costs are increasing; and growth in consumer spending is slow.

Retailing will continue to evolve and advance. Online retail will continue to grow as retailers invest in new emerging technologies. There will be fewer stores and those stores remaining will offer new experiences; there will be fewer, but better, jobs; and a career in retail in the future will be very different from today.

We are committed to ensuring the industry thrives through this period of transformation.

We tell the story of retail, work with our members to drive positive change and use our expertise and influence to create an economic and policy environment that enables retail businesses to thrive and consumers to benefit.

We do this in a way that delivers value back to our members, justifying their investment in the BRC. This membership comprises over 5,000 businesses delivering £180billion of retail sales and employing over one and half million people.



THE BRC CRIME SURVEY

The BRC Crime Survey 2022 is about the impact of violence and abuse on the welfare of retail workers; the numerical cost of crime and crime prevention online and in store to retail businesses and, indirectly, the customers they serve; the response of the overall justice and police systems; the growing importance of cyber-crime and security; and the anticipated threats to retail in the coming years.

Whether businesses are online, offline, or omnichannel; in town or out of town; small stores or larger stores – they all suffer the effects of crime one way or another.

This crime survey covers the period from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021. Consequently, it is different from previous surveys in that it includes periods of lockdown when non-food shops were closed or only operating click-and-collect; many consumers were required to work from home; and online sales were increasing rapidly.

The survey provides a unique snapshot of retail crime during the pandemic. It represents the single largest and most reliable barometer of the state of play of crime in retail and is based on a sample from retailers representing over 1.2 million employees and £170 billion market turnover.

Given not all retailers were allowed to open all year, not all statistics are directly comparable to previous years. We have taken this into account in our detailed comments and conclusions.

“The survey provides a unique snapshot of retail crime during the pandemic.”

FOREWORD

The pandemic has been a life-altering event for all of us. Our lives, our routines, our habits, were upended from the moment the country entered lockdown.

The impact on retail was no less severe. In an instant half the industry was shut down, and everyone immediately and dramatically changed the way they operated.

People in retail worked tirelessly to ensure we had access to the food and goods we needed. Jobs changed overnight as some retailers created entire online operations from scratch. Alongside NHS and care workers, retail workers were rightly applauded for their hard work in feeding the nation and keeping it moving.

Sadly, against this backdrop, retail workers were subject to a huge rise in violence and abuse. Incidents almost tripled from around 450 to 1,300 every single day, each taking an enormous mental and emotional toll on victims, their colleagues and their families. All the more shocking when you consider how much of retail was closed during this period, meaning this spike in incidents was concentrated in a much-reduced number of stores.

Alongside the emotional and physical toll, retail crime also has a massive financial impact. It cost the industry £1.5 billion in 2020/21 - £785 million in losses from crime and £715 million spent on prevention. These costs are ultimately borne by the customer in the form of higher prices, the retailer, who has less to spend improving the shopping experience, and retail workers who miss out on investments in training and benefits.

The response from the police has failed to meet the challenge. 60% of respondents described the police response as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ and despite almost 10% of incidents involving some level of violence only 4% were prosecuted.

There is hope for the future. Following sustained efforts by the BRC and our members, the government introduced an amendment to the Police, Crime, Sentencing, and Courts Bill which creates a statutory aggravating factor that will apply where an assault is committed against those providing a public service, including retail workers.

While this differs from Scotland, where there is a specific offence for violence and abuse against retail workers, it sends a strong signal that the government agrees these assaults are unacceptable.

Regardless of the differences in approach, police, the courts, and retailers need to continue to work together to ensure incidents are reported, investigated, and sentenced appropriately, and that the new law makes a difference.

We will be working with Police and Crime Commissioners across England and Wales to guarantee the new aggravated offence is understood and work with all forces to ensure retail crime is a priority in local policing strategies.

The public also need to help. The BRC supports #ShopKind – a national campaign which unites retailers in tackling abuse. While pandemic restrictions may have caused emotions to run high, violence and abuse is never appropriate. It should never be part of anyone’s job to endure violence or abuse and we encourage the public to play their part by being kind and patient when shopping.

Nobody should go to work fearing for their safety and we will continue to campaign on behalf of the three million people working in retail until everyone is best protected.

HELEN DICKINSON OBE
CEO OF BRC

TOPLINE RESULTS

Top issues - violence and abuse; and customer theft



1301
VIOLENT OR ABUSIVE
INCIDENTS EVERY DAY



ONLY 4%
INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE OR ABUSE
PROSECUTED, THOUGH ACTUAL
PROSECUTION NUMBERS DOUBLED



£1.5 BN
OVERALL COST
OF RETAIL CRIME



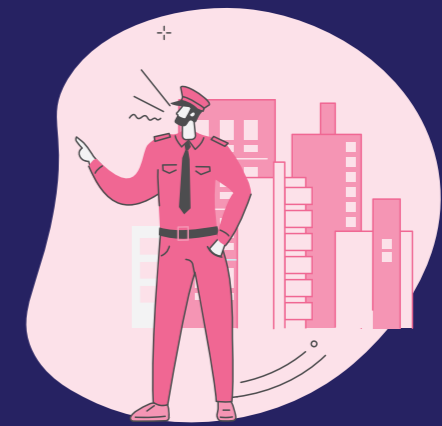
OVERALL LOSSES:
£786 M
LOSSES TO CUSTOMER
THEFT - £663 MILLION



COST OF CRIME PREVENTION
£715 M
EFFECTIVELY £1 SPENT ON
CRIME PREVENTION FOR
EVERY £1 LOST TO CRIME.



ONLINE LOSSES TO
THEFT AND FRAUD:
£76 M



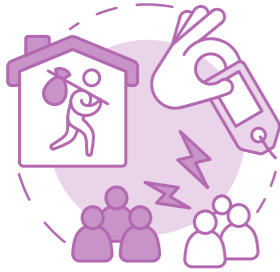
60%
RETAILERS SUFFER FROM
A POOR OR VERY POOR
POLICE RESPONSE



44%
RETAILERS REPORT INCREASED
CYBER ATTACKS WITH
56% STAYING THE SAME

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I THE HEADLINES



Violence and abuse

- Incidents of violence and abuse soared to 1301 incidents a day in 2020-21 (up from 455 the previous year). With many shops closed in the lockdowns, this huge number was concentrated in fewer shops.
- The rise was mainly accounted for by a rise in abuse. Even verbal abuse can have a huge impact on the health and wellbeing of retail colleagues.
- There were 21 incidents a day of violence with injury; 104 a day of violence without injury; and 1176 abusive incidents a day.
- For every 1000 employees there were 155 incidents. In other words, over 15% of the workforce suffered some form of harassment.
- 44 altercations per 1000 employees were specifically attributed to spitting, coughing, social distancing and mask wearing.



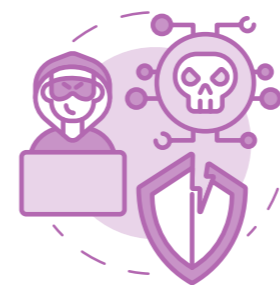
Monetary crime

- The overall monetary cost of crime, taking into account both actual losses and crime prevention costs, stood at just over £1.5 billion.
 - » This included nearly £715 million for crime prevention and nearly £786 million losses to crime itself, including £663 million to customer theft.
 - » Due to the lockdowns, this was a reduction on the previous year given fewer shops were open.
- Effectively, for every £1 lost to crime, retailers spent £1 on crime prevention.
- £76 million was lost to online theft, as more people turned to online purchases and more retailers introduced or expanded their online offering during the lockdowns.
 - » Of this, 50% was lost to physical theft (such as stealing packages from post boxes or from vans) and 50% to fraud.
 - » Overall 60% of retailers reported an increase in online theft.



Police and justice

- There was a slight rise in the percentage of incidents of violence and abuse reported to police at 57%.
- Actual numbers prosecuted virtually doubled to nearly 19,000. However, only 4% of incidents of violence and abuse resulted in a prosecution. Given the trebling of the actual number of incidents, this was lower in percentage terms than the previous year's 6%.
 - » Only 3% were dealt with as aggravated offences.
 - » In other words 96 out of every 100 victims were potentially failed by the justice and police system or from failure to report the incident.
- 60% of retailers regarded the police response to retail crime overall as poor or very poor, the same as last year.
 - » The lack of prosecutions in this important area is one explanation.
 - » The last year in which anyone rated the police response as excellent was 2012-13.



Cyber crime

- Just under 1/3 of retailers regard cyber-crime as a top three issue.
- However, nearly 45% reported an increase in cyber incidents last year and since 2017 nobody has reported a decrease.
- Expenditure on cyber-crime prevention accounted for £68 million, just under 10%, of the total allocated to crime prevention, a smaller percentage than previous years.



Looking ahead

- Looking ahead, violence and abuse against staff continued to lead the way as the single most important issue for retailers with everyone placing it in their top three threats.
 - » Given the figures on violence and abuse, not surprisingly almost 70% nominated it as the top threat – far above customer theft and fraud at around 60% each.

I BRC RESPONSE

(The BRC approach to dealing with the issues raised in the survey is outlined in the individual sections.)

Key BRC actions included:

- Co-chaired the National Retail Crime Steering Group (NRCSG) with the Home Office to produce action focused proposals on issues, especially violence and abuse, such as reporting crime; supporting victims; sharing data; and understanding the underlying social factors.
- Developed and promoted an animation for shop workers prepared with the Suzy Lamplugh Trust on how to de-escalate a potentially violent situation.
- Supported the #Shopkind campaign.
- Developed and promoted a cyber security toolkit, prepared with input from the NCSC, targeted to non-experts with overall responsibility for cyber resilience.
- Hosted webinars on cyber security related issues.
- Continued to work with the Home Office on the Joint Fraud Taskforce.



We called for

A separate offence for a crime of violence or abuse against a shopworker

More prosecutions of crimes of violence and abuse against shopworkers, with a rise in prosecutions and offences treated as aggravated.

A better understanding that abuse can be frightening and upsetting and should not be dismissed as one of the problems of the job.

Improved Sentencing Council Guidelines making it crystal clear that violence and abuse against shopworkers can be treated as aggravated offences.

Greater recognition by the police of shop theft as a crime rather than one of the costs of retailing.

A more appropriate response from the authorities to the use of shoplifting by organised crime and drug and alcohol addicts.

Police and Crime Commissioners to elevate the importance of retail crime in their strategies leading to an improved Police response.

An Inquiry into the approach by the police to retail crime.

Allocation of some of the extra time of the 20,000 additional officers to retail crime.

A single online reporting tool.

Improved statistics collection with retail crime to be recorded as such and not lost in the overall statistics.

Clear ICO guidelines on data sharing about criminal activity and consideration of any necessary changes to the Data Protection rules.

Extension of digital age verification and estimation to sales of alcohol – to reduce the aggravation experienced by retail staff carrying out legally required age checks.

MPs to turn their pledges to fight retail crime into action.



I GOVERNMENT ACTION IN RESPONSE



The UK Government continued to rely on the NRCSG throughout 2020-2021 to develop responses to crimes of violence and abuse, many of which were identified in the Call for Evidence.



The NRCSG established Task and Finish Groups on key issues such as information sharing; substance abuse as a factor; supporting victims; and better communication.



The BRC persuaded the Home Affairs Select Committee to conduct an Inquiry.



Subsequent to the review period, the Scottish Government and Parliament responded to the BRC campaign and enacted the standalone offence for violence and abuse towards shopworkers, aggravated when a worker was conducting an age verification.



In 2022, also in response to strong pressure, the UK Government amended the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill to make provision for England and Wales to the effect that certain offences MUST be treated as aggravated with the potential for tougher sentences when committed against someone involved in providing a public service, including shopworkers. Previously this has been up to the courts to decide.



Both the Scottish and the UK approaches will require improved retailer reporting and prosecution levels to be fully effective.

RETAIL CRIME IN THE PANDEMIC – A SNAPSHOT

The survey as a whole reflects the state of retail crime against the background of the pandemic which prevailed throughout the entire review period. We also asked some specific questions about the direct impact of the pandemic on retail crime.

The closure of many non-food outlets for various lengths of time during the survey period, combined with many workers in all sectors being required or recommended to work from home, resulted in changed shopping patterns away from town centres and towards online or click and collect.

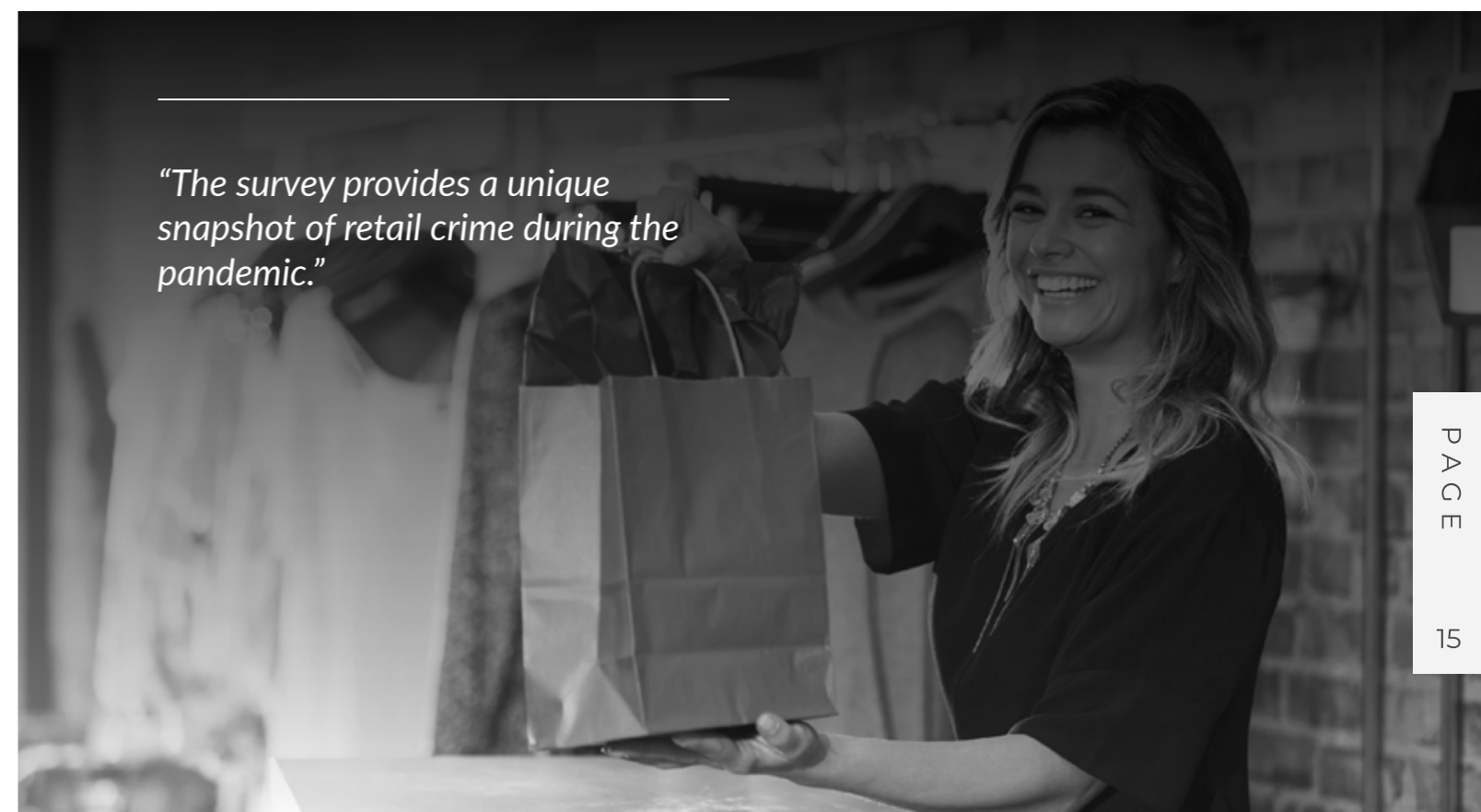
This means that the survey results are not directly comparable in some, though not all, respects with previous years.

Nevertheless, the very high reporting by retailers, together representing 1.2 million employees and at 42% a large proportion of total market share by revenue, enables us to have a very clear snapshot of retail crime during the first year of the pandemic, reflecting the experience of stores that were open or operating online for all or some of the time.

- During the pandemic there was a very large increase in incidents of violence or abuse towards retail staff, rising from 455 a day the previous year to over 1300. With many stores closed and fewer shoppers out on the streets, this would have been concentrated among far fewer staff and stores.
- Overall, there were 44 covid related altercations per 1000 employees for coughing, spitting, social distancing and mask wearing.
- Incidents increased in all retail locations – town centres and inner cities; shopping centres; and retail parks and out of town shops.
 - » Incidents were particularly high in retail parks with 82% reporting an increase, probably reflecting the higher footfall.
 - » In shopping centres 59% reported an increase, probably reflecting the stronger presence of security staff.
 - » Some retailers did report a decrease in all these types of location – suggesting the possibility of geographical differences, an observation backed up by ad hoc reports.

- Although actual numbers of prosecutions for instances of violence and abuse nearly doubled, they were still down at 4% of total incidents. This may reflect the reduction in violence with injury.
- The police response to retail crime as a whole was rated as poor or very poor by 60% retailers, consistent with previous years, even though police rather than retailers were responsible for enforcing covid regulations.
- Unsurprisingly, overall customer theft was down at just over £660 million.
 - » Nevertheless, as a simple comparison unadjusted for inflation, the losses to customer theft with fewer stores actually open were similar to those in 2017-18 when all stores were open.
- The losses online were £76 million, 50% due to actual theft and 50% to fraud. In spite of this, under 30% of retailers were in a position to increase their spending to meet that threat.
 - » 57% retailers saw an increase in online theft, no doubt reflecting the switch to online purchases by both retailers and consumers – with some retailers switching to online for the first time in just a matter of days.
- Cyber-attacks went up with 44% of retailers recording an increase and none a decrease. Retailers have been recording increases consistently for several years.
- Expenditure on crime prevention was also down at nearly £715 million.
 - » This includes cyber security at £68 million, also down on the previous year.

“The survey provides a unique snapshot of retail crime during the pandemic.”



THE SURVEY IN DETAIL

17

1301 incidents of violence and abuse a day up from 455 incidents a day last year – three times as many with fewer shops open



VIOLENCE AND ABUSE- THE NUMBER ONE ISSUE

HEADLINES



The survey findings

For every 1000 workers there were 155 incidents of violence or abuse in 2020-21, up from 54 in 2019-20. Over 15% of shopworkers suffered some form of violence or abuse.



- Violence has risen from 90% of retailers reporting it as a top three threat to 100% doing so.
 - » Way ahead of the other main top three issues - customer theft at just over 60% and fraud at just under 60%.
- Almost 7 in 10 now see violence as the number one issue
 - » This is ahead of cyber at just over 20% and customer theft around 15% as the number one issue.

Looking at the actual number of incidents

- In 2020-2021, with fewer shops actually open, incidents of violence and abuse rose dramatically from 455 incidents a day to over 1300, that is three times as many as the previous year.
 - » Whether or not this is a trend is difficult to know – but it is a snapshot of the position in 2020-21.
- Violent incidents went up to 125 a day from 114 a day.
 - » This included violence with injury which stood at 21 incidents a day (down from 30); and violence without injury at 104 incidents a day (up from 84).
- Abuse increased to 1176 incidents a day, up from 341 a day.
- Cumulatively that makes over 400,000 incidents a year.
- Incidents have increased every year since 2016-17.
- Significantly, incidents increased in all retail environments – inner city and town centre; retail parks and out of town; and shopping centres.
- The highest reports of increases were from retail parks (which also experienced a growth in footfall during lockdown) and out of town with over 80% retailers reporting an increase - followed by inner city and town centres at 70% and shopping centres well behind at 60%.
- There was a slight increase in the percentage of incidents actually reported to police from 54% to 57% - but because the number of prosecutions rose three-fold, although the number of prosecutions doubled to 19,000 this was only 4% (down in percentage terms from 6% last year), with just 3% prosecuted as an aggravated offence, the same as last year.

“For every 1000 workers there were 155 incidents of violence or abuse in 2020-21, up from 54 in 2019-20.”

Commentary

Violence and abuse against shopworkers has been a major concern for the BRC and its members for several years – a concern shared with other retail organisations and USDAW, which have also noted a serious increase.

This is clearly reflected in 100% of retailers placing violence in their top three threats for the next two years – with nearly 70% placing it as number one, far in advance of cyber and customer theft at just over 20% and 15% respectively placing them in the top three.

The dramatic rise in incidents of violence and abuse to over 400,000 incidents a year or over 1300 a day – be it a trend or a snapshot of a particular year – must be a cause for alarm, not least in a situation where with the lockdown and many shops closed such incidents would be even more concentrated among fewer shops and fewer staff. As the survey indicates, retailers noted an increase in incidents across all retail locations suggesting it was not triggered solely by changes in shopping habits.

Our separate question on altercations related to Covid suggests that many incidents were related to staff trying to ensure a safe environment for customers and staff doing their best to ensure the law was obeyed.

Some may seek solace from the fact that the vast majority were for abuse or violence without injury. However, the impact of a violent incident with or without injury affects not only retail workers who are attacked but also their families and those who witness the attacks. A push or shove may not injure a person physically, but it can have still an emotional effect just as it would out on the street if a stranger were to push or shove a passer-by.

Moreover, abuse is not victimless. It can take many forms – ranging from the clearly illegal racial or sexual abuse to an aggressive or abusive altercation. As with violence itself, it would be unacceptable on the street and there is no reason for it to be acceptable in a store.

Separate research by a number of retailers shows that even an apparently mild argument can have a significant emotional impact on staff members who are not accustomed to being placed in a position where they are expected to stand by and accept any abuse as part of the job. Nobody should expect to go to work fearing they will be attacked or abused.

Shopworkers are often in a vulnerable situation, sometimes alone in a store late at night or with just one other colleague, possibly quite young or in their first job or a part-time worker, facing intimidation from someone potentially carrying a weapon and possibly suffering the effects of alcohol or drugs. Unlike a street incident, a retail worker has to return to the scene day after day to do their job, always wondering whether the incident may be repeated, even by the same person, leading to stress and anxiety.

Too often retail workers have come to see this as part of their job.

Two common triggers for such attacks, in addition to trying to remind customers of the law on Covid restrictions, are asking for ID for age verification (where failure to carry out the check is a criminal offence for the employee but not for the perpetrator of an under- age sale) and stopping someone who is believed to be stealing goods (which as the survey shows is a key cost for retailers). Official statistics indicate police recorded nearly 230,000 cases of customer theft in the year to March 2021 in England and Wales - which indicates the scale of the challenge.

Against this background, the police and justice system response is disappointing – as is reflected in the high proportion of retailers (60%) who continue to regard the police response as poor or very poor. Almost 10% of incidents (125 a day) involve some level of violence but with just 4% of incidents of violence and abuse actually prosecuted (a reduction in percentage terms from the previous year’s already low 6%, although an increase in actual numbers) and just 3% as aggravated offences, many thousands of affected shopworkers never receive any satisfaction from the police or justice system - even when the incident is actually reported.

We note that it is important that retailers report all incidents rather than just 57% as at present. An improved police response and prosecution rate would encourage them to do so.

Lack of reporting of incidents, lack of police response, lack of prosecutions, a perception that low level crime often accompanied by violence or threats of violence will not attract police attention or a commensurate sentence, lack of police resources, a greater willingness by gangs and addicts to engage in shop crime in pursuit of their habit are all background issues featuring in the rise of violence and abuse.

BRC Approach

While we welcome the increase in total prosecution numbers, with just 4% of incidents of violence and abuse prosecuted, the current system is clearly not working. We must hope that in following years the number of incidents will fall but the actual number of prosecutions will at the very least stay the same.

For some years the BRC, along with USDAW and others, has called for a separate standalone offence of violence and abuse towards retail workers in the course of their employment, along the lines of the Emergency Workers Offence.

We commend the Scottish Government and Parliament for legislation, supported by every single MSP, to achieve that end with a new offence of violence or abuse towards a retail worker, aggravated when directed to a worker enforcing the law through an age check. We understand from Police Scotland that in the first six months 1655 incidents were reported under this legislation, with 958 (58%) sent on to Procurators Fiscal for action (5 serious assault; 382 common assault; 571 threats and abuse).

Positive action has also been taken in 2022 by the UK Government acting for England and Wales in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, to require the courts to treat certain existing offences against people serving the public as aggravated - where currently the aggravated status is something that is included in the Sentencing Council Guidelines but is not mandatory. The industry believes the amendment represents an important step forward in recognising the problem. The focus now needs to shift to improving reporting by retailers and, crucially, to ensuring an effective law enforcement response.

“Against this background, the police and justice system response is disappointing – as is reflected in the high proportion of retailers (60%) who continue to regard the police response as poor or very poor.”

The action that has been taken in both cases is very welcome. It is essential that all concerned monitor closely the impact of these approaches on incidents of violence or abuse.

Increased levels of reporting and prosecution will be important metrics to consider in years to come. We would also ask the UK Government to ensure that in the case of the offences newly mandated to be treated as aggravated, statistics should be kept of the number of prosecutions for violence and abuse against retail workers and their outcome, noting whether the offences are for violence, violence without injury or abuse. Likewise, the Scottish Government should compile an easily accessible record of actual prosecutions under the separate offence and their outcome.

Success also requires the Government to stress to all the actors in the justice system in England and Wales that such crimes should be prosecuted and the courts must treat them as aggravated and sentence accordingly.

While pointing to greater police action as the key to better reporting and prosecution – and the key to a reduction in attacks through a greater certainty of being caught, prosecuted and sentenced – we also recognise that retailers themselves need to improve the level of reporting of these and other retail crimes so that police resources can be better targeted and the courts can recognise the seriousness of the situation. A simplified reporting mechanism common to all forces could help.

The BRC also supports improvements in CCTV and exchanges of information among retailers, while respecting the rules on data protection and privacy. In response to requests for further advice, the ICO has placed some guidance on its website to assist retailers in ensuring they keep within the law – but also to indicate what is possible within the law. It is important this is clearly understood by retailers. It is also important that any need for amendments to the Data Protection laws that are necessary to improve exchanges of information and ensure total clarity, while respecting the rights of data subjects, should be considered by the DCMS in its current (2022) review.

Many incidents of violence and abuse are linked to the legal requirement for retail employees to enforce the age restricted sales law by asking for ID – and to be subject to criminal prosecution if they fail to do so. We continue to propose that Government should permit the use of digital age verification and estimation for age checks in relation to alcohol (the largest single age sale category) on the same basis as they are allowed for other age sales. We welcome the decision finally to allow a limited experiment and hope that the experiment will become permanent.

The BRC has worked with the Suzy Lamplugh Trust to produce an animation for use by any retailer that wishes to show retail workers how to defuse a potentially violent situation.

The BRC co-chairs the National Retail Crime Steering Group with the Home Office. This has focused on responding to retail violence through better reporting, removing data barriers, communicating better with the public, supporting victims, and assessing substance misuse as a factor. We support the NRCSG funded #Shopkind campaign.



1. Ensure courts and police act on new compulsory aggravated status for incidents of retail violence in England and Wales and use the standalone offence in Scotland

2. More reporting by retailers – with better police follow up

3. Improved statistics for offences and prosecutions

4. Improve prosecution rate

5. Improve police response




“The BRC also supports improvements in CCTV and exchanges of information among retailers, while respecting the rules on data protection and privacy.”



More policies that could potentially assist include:

- Ensuring retail crime is treated as a strategic priority
- A review of policing of retail crime
- Use of the College of Policing to improve the understanding of retail crime
- A Report on innovative solutions for tackling violence in the retail sector with the possibility of roll-out funding for any identified as particularly successful
- A single online reporting tool common to all forces
- Better recording of retail crimes of violence in the statistics
- Review of out of court disposals and their effectiveness
- Increased penalties as applied by the courts

Action on crimes of violence and abuse

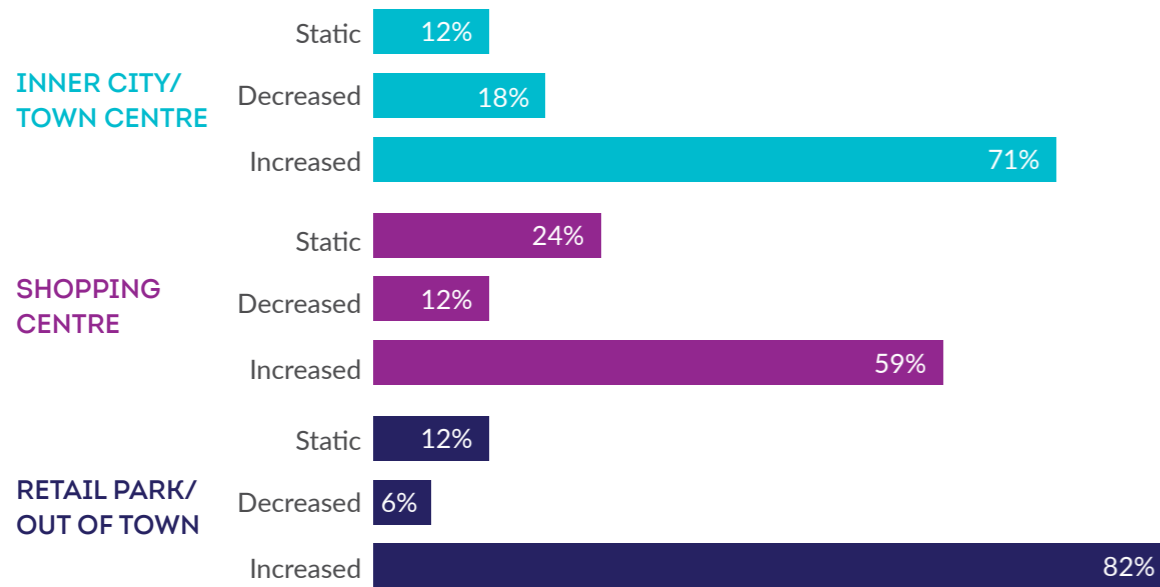
	2019-20	2020-21
 REPORTED TO POLICE	54%	57%
 RESULTED IN PROSECUTION	6%	4%
 PROSECUTED AS AGGREGATED OFFENCE	3%	3%

Action on crimes of violence and abuse

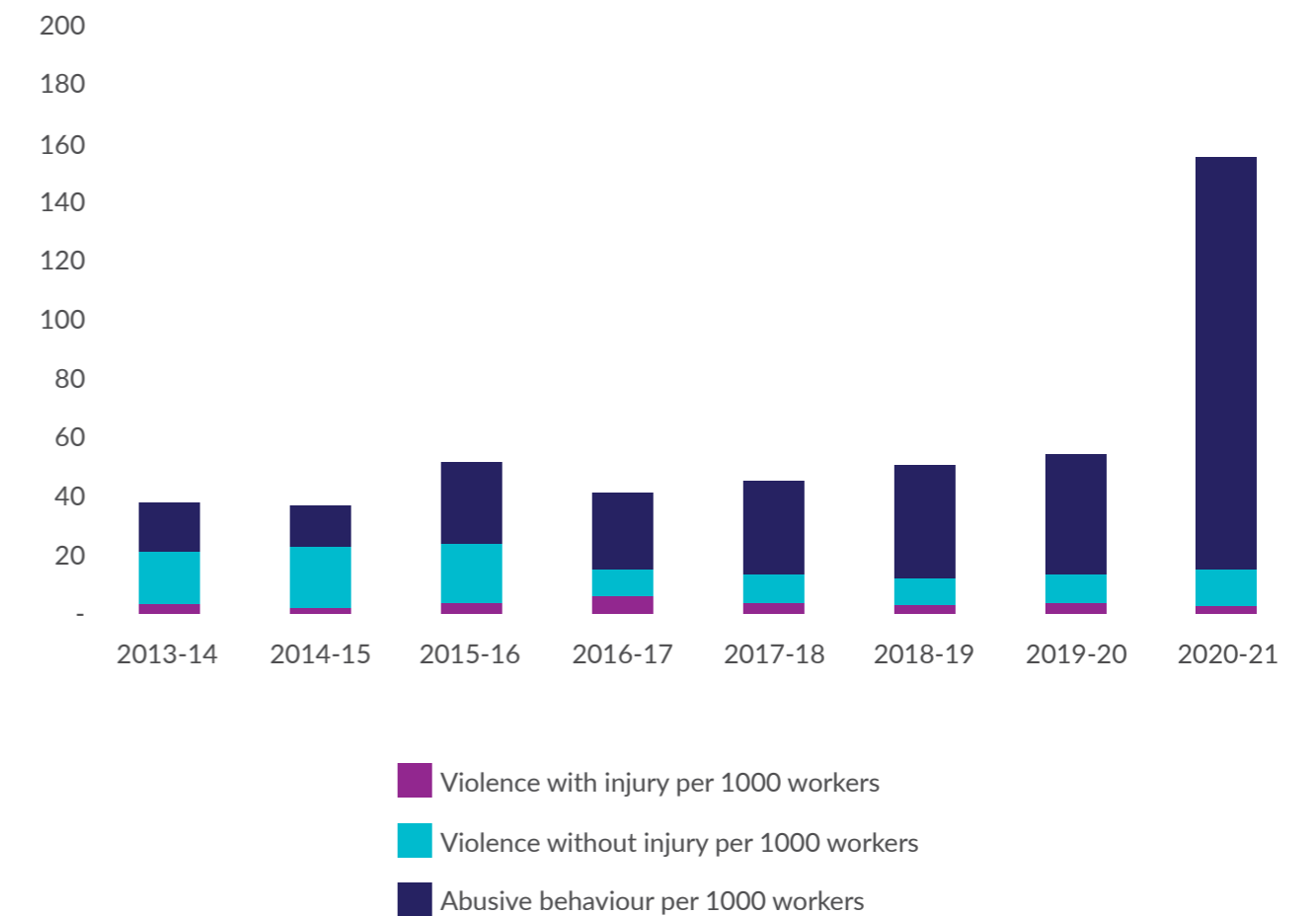
PER DAY	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
VIOLENCE WITH INJURY PER DAY	23	30	21
VIOLENCE WITHOUT INJURY PER DAY	78	84	104
ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR PER DAY	323	341	1,176
TOTAL	424	455	1,301



Incidents of violence and abuse by location



Incidents per 1000 workers



“The BRC also supports improvements in CCTV and exchanges of information among retailers, while respecting the rules on data protection and privacy.”



THE COST OF RETAIL CRIME

HEADLINES



The Survey Findings

The overall cost of crime – taking the losses from actual incidents and the cost of crime prevention into account – was £1.5 billion, down from £2.5 billion last year, reflecting the closure of some shops during the pandemic.

The losses to retail from criminal incidents overall was over three quarters of a billion pounds at around £786 million.

Over £660 million was lost to customer theft in the latest year, the same in actual terms as in 2017-18 (a full trading year) but down from £900 million last year.



- This was 85% of the total losses (which also included employee theft, robbery, burglary and damage).
- Online theft came in at £76 million, spread 50:50 between actual theft and fraud.
- Robbery and burglary taken together reached £37 million
- Crime prevention spending amounted to £715 million – roughly equivalent to £1 for every £1 lost to crime – a 40% drop on the previous year
- £68 million of the total spent on crime prevention was for cyber security, a drop from the previous year which in itself saw a drop from the year before.
- The high point for expenditure on crime prevention was 2018 – 2019, while the high point for actual crime was 2019-2020

Commentary

It is not only retailers who suffer from the effects of retail crime but also consumers and employees.

Unfortunately, official reports do not always distinguish between retail crime and other crime so the BRC survey is the most reliable indicator of retail crime and crime reporting.

Retailers operate on low margins so losses to crime and expenditure on crime prevention reduce the capacity to bear down further on prices, to improve terms and conditions for staff further, to improve the overall customer experience in store and online and to increase efficiency.

With customer theft the highest area for loss at over £660 million retailers have to take the issue seriously. In an official survey, the police recorded almost 230,000 incidents of customer theft (shoplifting) in the year to March 31 in England and Wales – indicating the scale of the problem for retailers.

During the pandemic resources were diverted to Covid related security as the priority. Although customer theft was down by a third on the previous year, even with many stores closed and more at door security, it remained relatively consistent with previous years, perhaps due to the focus on Covid issues.

Retailers are reluctant to undermine the overall customer experience by over-policing their premises, but they cannot turn a blind eye to customer theft.

Theft is also linked to violence and abuse in store – which continue to increase and increased dramatically this year. One of the key instigators of violence and abuse is challenging customers believed to be committing theft – which in itself also impinges on the willingness of staff to challenge potential shoplifters.

The contributors to total losses to customer theft are not totally clear – but could potentially include walk offs from self-service tills either intentionally or unintentionally.



Retailers have taken steps to improve detection with improvements to CCTV; a better understanding of the data that can be exchanged and shared with other retailers and the police; and tagging of goods of a lower value including food items.

However, it is significant that only 57% of incidents of abuse and violence are reported to police. If these incidents are not reported, it would seem reasonable to conclude that incidents of theft are also not fully reported.

One reason for the failure to report even these crimes of violence and abuse is the perception of a poor or very poor police response by over 60% of retailers – which relates to their response overall not just to violence and abuse. In the case of violence and abuse (often associated with theft) only 4% are even prosecuted (see earlier comments) – which suggests that prosecutions for what are perceived as lower-level offences are probably even lower.

There remains a perception among some retailers that some police forces do not regard shop theft as a ‘real’ crime, particularly if it is under £200 in value (often perceived as the lower limit before action is taken).

Such a perception is probably also held among repeat offenders, who are a significant proportion of the total, and who are willing to take the risk, possibly to support drug related habits, in the belief that nothing much will happen even if they are caught. There is a strong belief among some of them – supported by ad hoc reports – that even if they appear in court multiple times, the sentence will be so light it will hardly make a difference. The lack of prosecutions for even the most serious offences of violence and abuse would support such a perception of a lack of action overall.

“During the pandemic resources were diverted to Covid related security as the priority.”





BRC approach

The BRC continues to support initiatives to reduce retail crime and the cost of crime.

Some retailers take an unnecessarily limited view of the ability to share data under the GDPR rules, no doubt being concerned by the very heavy penalties that can apply to offences. However, it is important to understand the potential for legally shared information and use of CCTV to assist in crime prevention and detection.

We are keen to promote a good understanding of what is possible while respecting the rights of data subjects and have supported discussions with the ICO directly and via the Home Office. The ICO has signposted how data can and should be shared and how CCTV can be used legally and effectively on its website. It is important this is totally clear and understood. Should any changes be required to Data Protection laws to assist in legitimate exchanges of data and clarity on the legal possibilities, while respecting the rights of data subjects, these should be considered in the current (2022) context of the DCMS review of the approach to data protection.

We regret the continuing poor perception of the police response to retail crime. With nobody ranking the response as excellent and only 6% as good, the best that can be said is that 33% rank it as fair. Over 60% believe it to be poor or very poor. It has been eight years since any retailers perceived the response as excellent; and five years since more retailers perceived the response as good or fair than poor or very poor.

We support the police when they encourage retailers to report all crime – and note there has been a small increase in reporting of incidents of violence and abuse to 57%. Given the increase in the number of actual incidents, in terms of raw numbers this is a larger increase than it might otherwise seem to be. We recognise this leaves 43% of even these more serious offences that go unreported, let alone incidents perceived as less serious. Sometimes retailers believe the poor police response does not warrant the time and effort involved. A standard simplified reporting system could help.

One reason we support the police in encouraging retailers to make reports is because this can help provide a better picture of retail crime. This enables the police to target their resources better and develop a better strategy for combatting crime particularly in badly affected areas.

Police and Crime Commissioners have a role to play by including retail crime specifically in their strategies – and we note the improvement in that regard. For maximum effectiveness, and greater accuracy, it is important that retail crime is recorded as such rather than merely as part of the overall theft or violence and abuse statistics.

The Government has been recruiting an extra 20,000 police officers. It is essential that some of this resource should be allocated specifically to fighting retail crime.

We have suggested that a full review or overview assessment of retail crime policing could be beneficial in identifying successful approaches and spreading good practice. This would build on the Task and Finish Groups of the National Retail Crime Steering Group which have tried to develop good reporting and data sharing practices.

Linked to that, it is important that the Police Inspectorate should make the main focus of its reports the success or otherwise of forces in combatting crime rather than headcount or financial matters – except where there are clear links.

While we are encouraged that police forces do not actually subscribe to a policy of non-prosecution for retail theft below £200, it is important this is followed in word and deed and made abundantly clear to offenders who are tempted to commit multiple offences just under the limit.

The role of organised gangs in retail crime including shop-lifting needs to be understood and county lines should never be a barrier to action.

Linked to the police response is the response of the courts. Sentencing is an issue when those involved in theft are repeatedly given light sentences. We regret that the review of the Sentencing Council Guidelines did not lead to a separate section in the Guidelines on dealing with retail related crime.

The effectiveness, targeting and scope of all sentences should be kept under constant review to ensure they are appropriate and dissuasive.

Finally, dealing with retail crime is not just a policing issue but a community issue. The underlying causes of such crime need to be addressed, from alcohol and drug addiction to the grooming of underage children to undertake the theft. The work of the Task and Finish Groups of the NRCSG to audit and map out various local approaches to targeting substance misuse in the hope of identifying best practice is clearly a positive contribution. However, it is essential that Government dedicates sufficient resources to effectively tackle these underlying causes.

“We support the police when they encourage retailers to report all crime – and note there has been a small increase in reporting of incidents of violence and abuse to 57%.”

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
TOTAL COST OF RETAIL CRIME					
VALUE	701,994,189	895,695,073	977,754,310	1,278,245,381	785,989,162
% CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR		28%	9%	31%	-39%
SPENDING ON CRIME PREVENTION					
VALUE	995,045,749	1,024,316,054	1,217,403,034	1,188,020,812	714,650,015
% CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR		3%	19%	-2%	-40%
SPENDING ON CYBER SECURITY					
VALUE	138,928,689.52	162,169,585.23	187,035,724	160,361,984	67,993,553
% CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR		17%	15%	-14%	-58%
SPEND ON ALL OTHER CRIME PREVENTION MEASURES					
VALUE	856,117,060	862,146,468	1,030,367,310	1,027,658,828	646,656,463
% CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR		1%	20%	0%	-37%
TOTAL RECORDED THEFT AND DAMAGE					
CUSTOMER THEFT	502,783,340	663,249,000	770,747,327	935,462,796	663,361,878
EMPLOYEE THEFT	17,444,013	35,429,393	154,309,351	284,396,073	41,414,819
OTHERS THEFT	3,688,206	481,072	11,440,274	28,109,947	38,939,505
ROBBERY	5,499,729	14,651,690	4,569,915	7,573,143	4,963,442
BURGLARY	13,530,635	15,045,612	29,591,427	17,778,586	16,838,298
DAMAGE	3,234,165	3,388,642	7,096,021	4,389,284	20,471,220



1. Improved police response

6. Simple standard reporting

2. More prosecutions

7. Priority issue for PCC strategies

3. Better statistics

8. Better understanding of underlying causes of customer theft

4. Dissuasive sentences

9. Better data sharing

5. Review of retail crime policing



Views of police response

HEADLINES



39%

Only 39% say response is fair or good.



6%

Only 6% classify as good



50%

50% say response is poor – up on a year ago very poor



60%

Over 60% classify response as poor



50%

2014-15 was last time over 50% said response good or fair

The Survey Results



We asked retailers to rate how good a job they felt the police do to tackle and respond to the retail crime of all types they experience.

Only 39% of retailers rated the police response as good or fair, but for another year the majority (61%) rated it as poor or very poor.

Effectively, there has been no improvement in the last two years and figures have returned to the relatively low levels of satisfaction experienced since 2014-15.

On the positive side, 6% of retailers rated the response as good – down from 13% - with 33% rating it as fair, up 6%.

The last time over half of retailers ranked the response as good or fair was in 2014-15 when a high of 57% ranked it as good or fair.

The last time anyone at all rated the response as excellent was in 2012-13 when 8% said it was excellent.



Commentary

Confidence in a good police response to retail crime is important because

- It encourages more comprehensive reporting by retailers, which is currently as low as 57% even in the case of crimes of violence and abuse.
- It enables accurate statistics of overall retail crime to be maintained and hot spots to be identified.
- It enables police forces to prioritise their activities and resources more in line with the needs of communities.
- It is essential to prosecutions
- In the future it will be important to enable the mandatory aggravated offences to succeed as a deterrent.
- It is an effective deterrent in itself if potential criminals know there is a high chance they will be caught and prosecuted

It is likely that perceptions of the police response reflect the response to issues that retailers see as key concerns for policing – violence and abuse and customer theft.

In spite of the rise in actual numbers, the low rate of only 4% of prosecutions of the threefold increase in crimes of violence and abuse when such incidents have risen to over 1300 a day is never going to be seen as acceptable or anything other than a reflection of a poor police response, not least when 10% of such incidents involve an element of violence.

In terms of monetary loss, customer theft remains the single largest problem with retailers spending £1 on protection for every £1 lost. Even though many shops were closed during the pandemic and many people were required to work from home, over £660 million was lost to customer theft in 2020-21.

It is possible the lack of satisfaction reflects a reduction in police resources or, even worse, a perception that retail crime – particularly low value theft or abuse – is not particularly important for policing and is seen as part of the cost of doing business or part of the job.

Indeed, it seems retail theft of low value items is often regarded as an issue for retailers themselves to police rather than the police themselves – but without police follow up nobody can know the underlying causes such as the extent to which the incidents are related to gang activity or the overall extent of the problem.

While fraud, cyber security and online theft are also all issues of concern, they require specialist responses. It is customer theft and physical or verbal assaults that most retailers particularly associate with a good or poor police response.

BRC Approach

The BRC strongly believes that retail crime needs to be clearly recognised and addressed as a category in itself in strategic plans and in the statistics if the police response is to improve.

Without an effective police response and without the police compiling a full record of all the incidents specifically under a retail banner, it is likely low levels of satisfaction will continue as criminal activity is seen to pay. Only by ensuring incidents are clearly recorded as retail rather than general theft or aggressive behaviour, as so many currently are, can a clear picture be obtained officially.

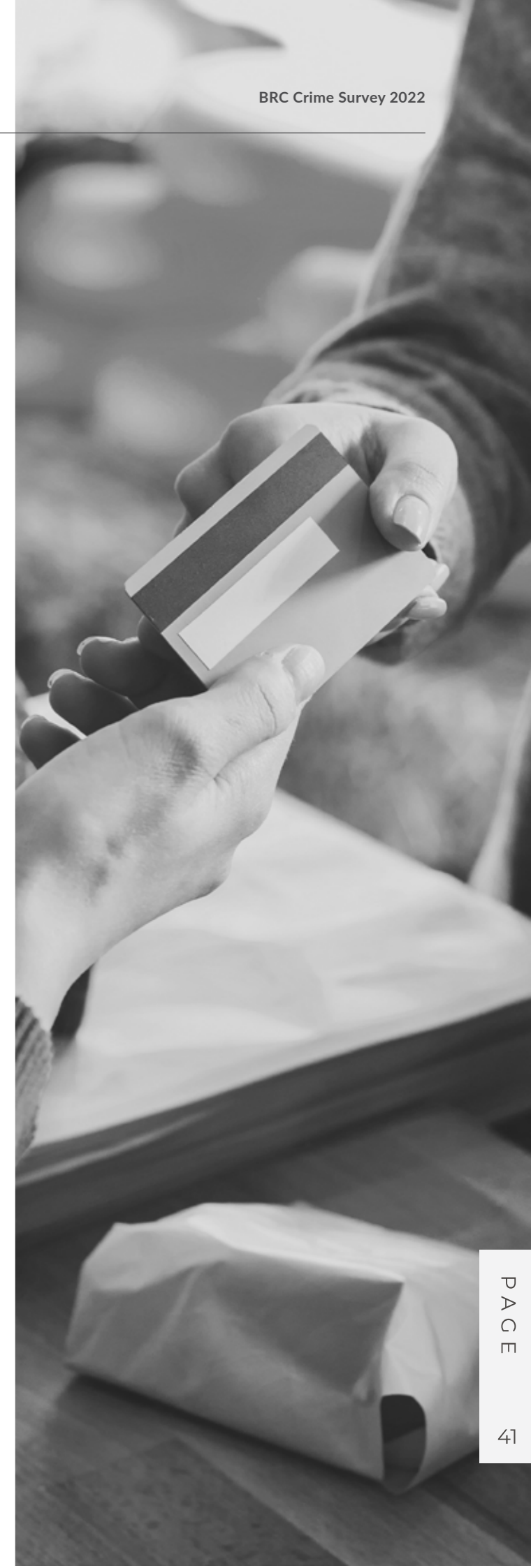
However, reporting only 57% of retail crime is also not going to lead to an effective response – while the lack of an effective response is likely one of the reasons that reporting is still low. If only 57% of incidents of violence and abuse are reported, it is likely that even fewer incidents of theft are reported if it is thought that the perpetrator will not be pursued for lack of time, resources or evidence – not least if prosecutions of serious incidents of violence and abuse are so low.

A low reporting rate and a very low prosecution rate are the enemies of a high regard for the police response.

It is important that forces are clear and widely communicate that there is no policy of not prosecuting low value theft. That should be made widely known and acted upon if criminals are not to work the system. A simple, single reporting tool would help to ensure crimes are reported.

The BRC continues to co-chair the National Retail Crime Steering Group with the Home Office to emphasise the importance of the police response and to identify and resolve issues that undermine an effective response – and undermine full reporting by retailers themselves.

We welcome Police and Crime Commissioners responding to our call to include retail crime within their strategies – a move that could potentially ensure that the police response is kept under review.



1. More prosecutions

2. PCC plans prioritised and acted upon

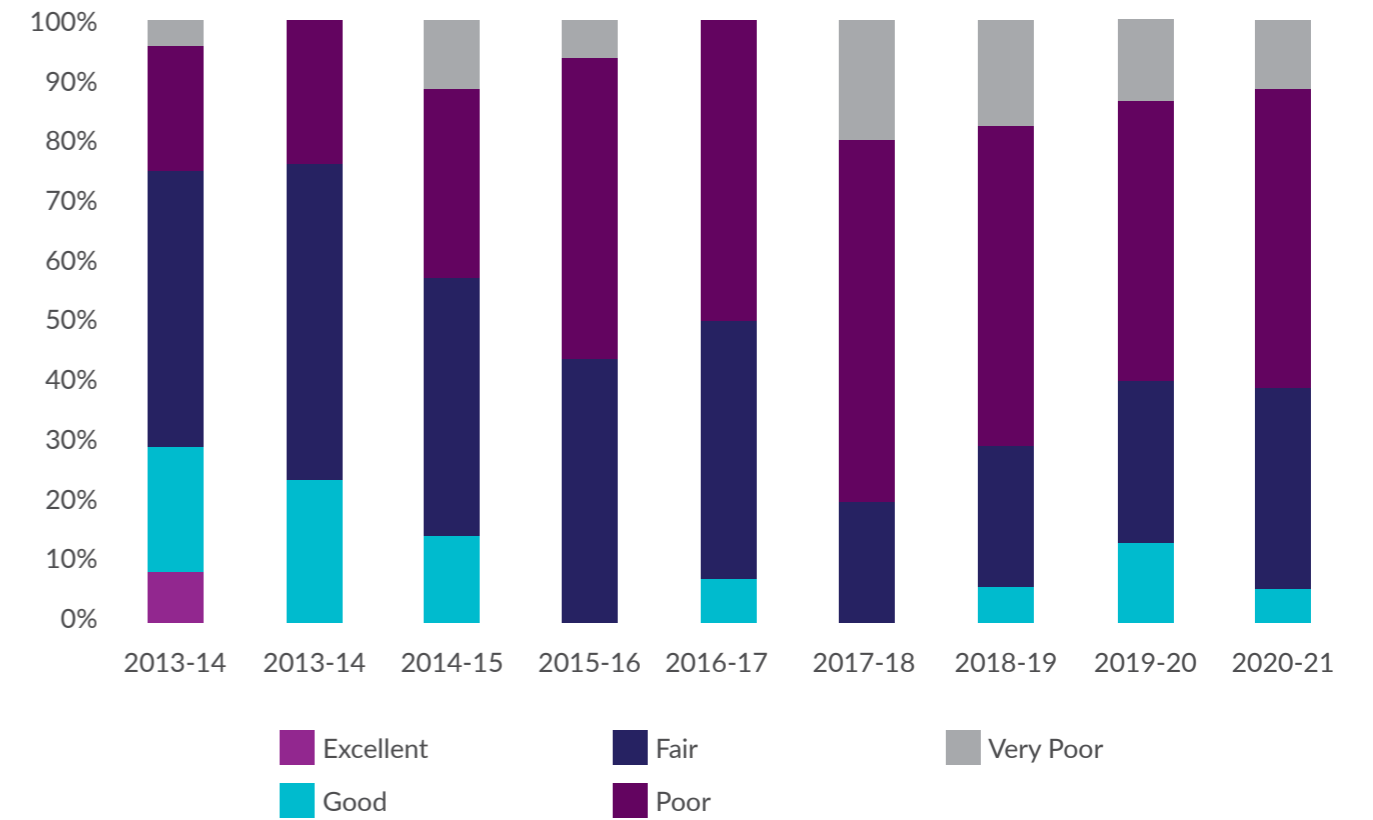
3. Better recording and recognition of incidents as retail related

4. More police resources for retail crime

5. Better data sharing

“The BRC strongly believes that retail crime needs to be clearly recognised and addressed as a category in itself in strategic plans and in the statistics if the police response is to improve.”

How good a job do you think the police do to tackle and respond to the retail crime which you experience?





THE MOST SIGNIFICANT THREATS TO RETAIL

HEADLINES



100%

Violence against staff has solidified its position as the number one issue – with every retailer placing it in the top three issues and seven in ten as THE top issue.



63%

Theft by customers is second as a top three issue – but only 63% of retailers place it in the top three.



58%

Fraud comes close behind with 58% placing it in the top three threats.



33%

Cyber-attacks and burglary are of equal concern but well behind with one third of retailers placing each in the top three.

The Survey Findings



When asked to nominate the three most significant threats to their businesses over the next two years 100% retailers nominated violence against their staff in the top three issues – up from 90% the previous year.

Customer theft came in second with over 60% believing it is a top three issue – down from 80% - with just under 60% lining up behind fraud – up from 40%.

Cyber and burglary were well behind customer theft as a top three issue at just one third each, down from 40%.

THE VERY TOP PLACE NUMBER ONE ISSUE is violence against retail staff, nominated by 7 in 10 retailers (70%).

Behind that as top issue came cyber (21%) and customer theft (16%)

Commentary

For retailers, employee welfare is the number one concern – well above any monetary considerations – when looking at the anticipated threats over the next two years.

Once again violence and abuse towards retail staff were ranked way ahead of any other significant threat. With 100% of retailers placing it in the top three for the first time, it is clearly causing considerable concern across the sector and has been consistently high in previous surveys.

Given the incidence of violent and abusive attacks running at over 1300 a day – up from 455 – and the low prosecution rate – it is clear retailers consider it essential that meaningful law enforcement action is necessary following the Government's introduction of the requirement that the courts in England and Wales MUST treat many such incidents as aggravated.

Given the cost of customer theft at £663 million is by far the highest loss to crime, it is equally unsurprising that customer theft remains a serious concern for 63% of retailers, (albeit with only 16% placing it at number one) with fraud close behind at 58%.

In turn the rise in concern over fraud from 40% to nearly 60% may reflect the growing use of online sales where fraud is more prevalent.

Perhaps more surprising, given the acknowledgement by 100% of retailers that cyber-attacks have increased or remained static, only one fifth placed it first, possibly reflecting a difference between those retailers predominantly online and others who are omni-channel.

Nevertheless, cyber security is not just a matter for online sellers and sales but for all retailers for their own business critical systems and data.

The BRC Approach

The key approach to the threats is to seek a better recognition by Government of violence and abuse as an issue for police, courts and sentencing; a better police response; a better prosecution rate; more dissuasive sentencing; improved statistics; more clarity on the potential to exchange data within the law; and a more strategic emphasis on retail crime by the police.

As explained in detail earlier, for some years the BRC, along with USDAW and others, has called for a separate standalone offence of violence and abuse towards retail workers in the course of their employment, along the lines of the successful Emergency Workers Offence.

We commend the Scottish Government and Parliament for legislation, supported by every single MSP, to achieve that end with a new offence of violence or abuse towards a retail worker, aggravated when directed to a worker enforcing the law through an age check.

We welcome the positive action has also been taken by the UK Government acting for England and Wales to require the courts to treat certain existing offences against people serving the public as aggravated – where currently the aggravated status is something that is included in the Sentencing Council Guidelines but is not mandatory.

The focus now needs to shift to improving reporting by retailers and, crucially, to ensuring an effective law enforcement response. It is essential that all concerned keep good statistics of prosecutions and their outcome.

Government, the police and the courts need to recognise the impact of violence and abuse on victims and develop policing of retail issues as a strategic priority. This also requires improvements in statistics and recording of offences so that it is clear when there is a retail element involved.

Attention must be given to understanding the facilitators of fraud and how best to combat its growth. The BRC is a member of the Home Office Joint Fraud Taskforce which works on these issues.

All businesses, small and large, must understand the threat of cyber-attacks and their role in prevention.

Going forward it is vital that retailers report all crimes – of theft as well as violence and abuse – as the best way to ensure resources are directed to arrest and prosecution.

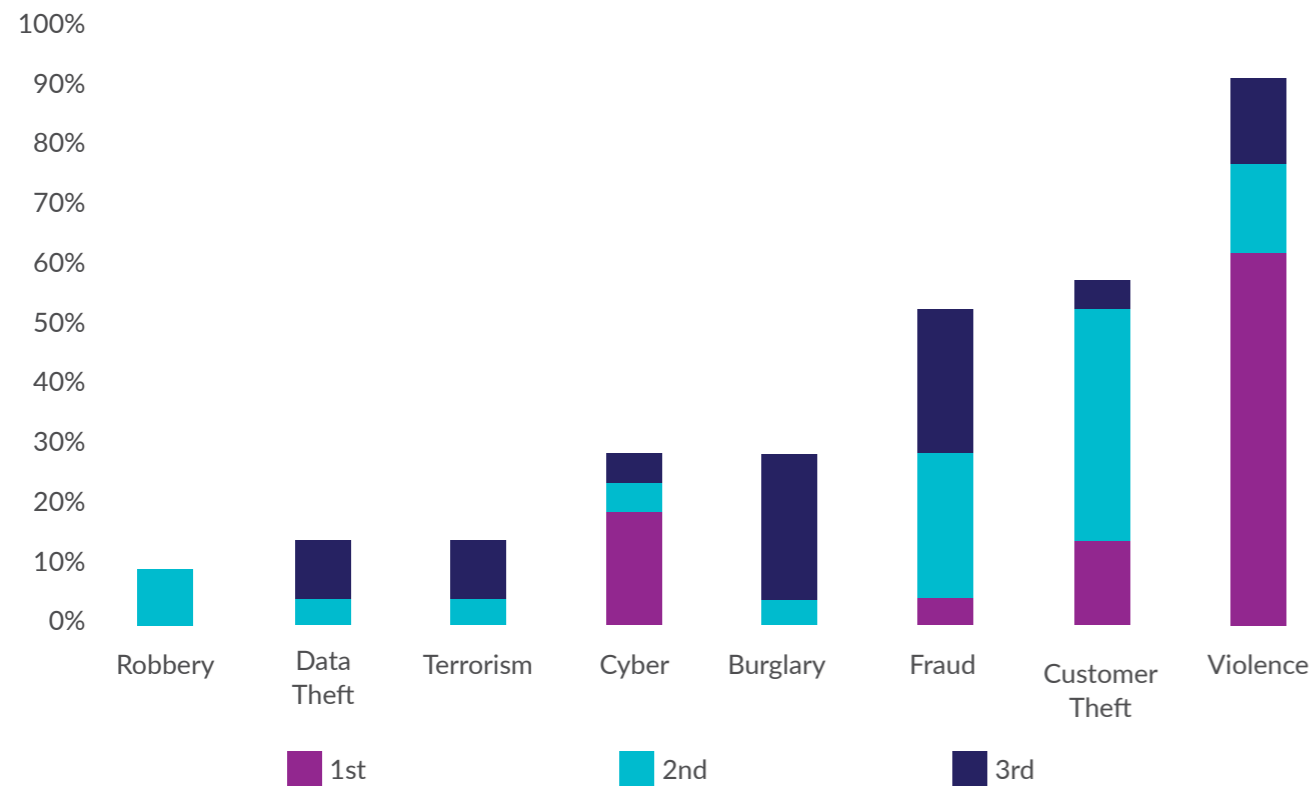
Retailers must also make the most of exchanges of data and the use of CCTV within the legal limits and ensure these are better understood.



Most significant overall threats to retail

	ROBBERY	DATA THEFT	TERRORISM	CYBER	BURGLARY	FRAUD	CUSTOMER THEFT	VIOLENCE
1ST	0%	0%	0%	21%	0%	5%	16%	68%
2ND	11%	5%	5%	5%	5%	26%	42%	16%
3RD	0%	11%	11%	5%	26%	26%	5%	16%
TOTAL	11%	16%	16%	32%	32%	58%	63%	100%

How good a job do you think the police do to tackle and respond to the retail crime which you experience?



“For retailers, employee welfare is the number one concern – well above any monetary considerations – when looking at the anticipated threats over the next two years.”



1. Better police response

5. Effective implementation of the new rules in England and Wales

2. More reporting by retailers

6. Good use of the standalone offence in Scotland

3. Better understanding of uses of data

7. Ensure the importance of good cyber security is understood by ALL retailers

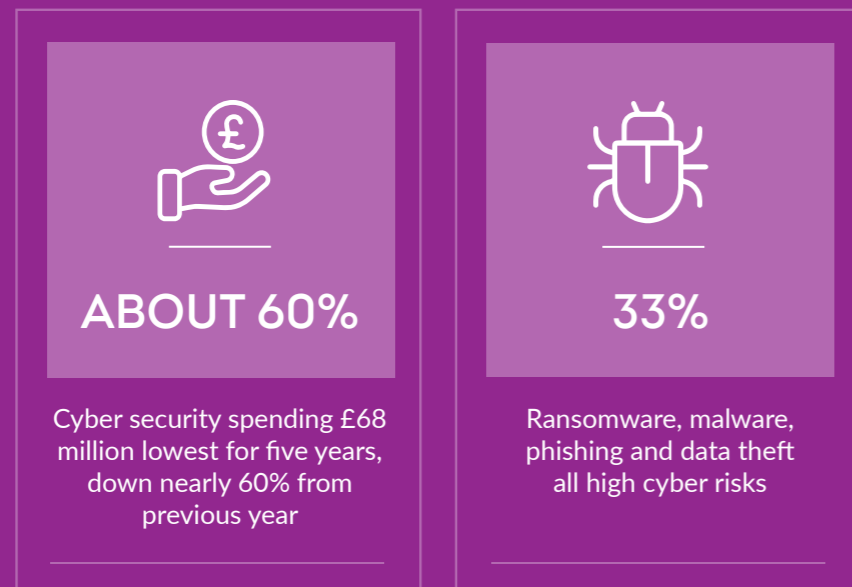
4. More prosecutions

8. Better understanding of how to overcome online fraud

CYBER SECURITY – A GROWING ISSUE



HEADLINES



The Survey Results

One third of retailers classified cyber security as one of the top three threats to their business over the next two years, with one in five placing it as the number one threat. This compares with 100% placing violence in the top three, with customer theft and fraud following at around 60% each.

Cyber dropped from 4th to 5th in the ranking.

44% of retailers reported an increase in cyber security threats over the previous year with a further 56% reporting the threats stayed the same.

Nobody has reported a decrease since 2016 – and then only 9% did so. In other words, 100% retailers have reported an increase or attacks staying the same year by year for 5 years.

When it comes to the type of cyber threats retailers face and their relative likelihood of being affected, ransomware is regarded as a high risk by just over 80% of businesses closely followed by malware and phishing, each at nearly 70% with theft of data also over 50% at 56%.

Nobody saw ransomware or malware as a low threat.

Whaling was considered a medium risk by 75% of retailers, with credential stuffing; denial of service; spoofing; and web app based attacks all at around 50%.

Doxing was seen as a low risk by nearly 70% of retailers (the only type of threat regarded as a low risk by over one third of retailers).

Against this backdrop, spending on cyber security protection was considerably down (by nearly 60%) at £68 million (compared with £160 million the previous year), and at 9.5% of total crime prevention spend was also down from 13.5% in its share of the crime prevention budget.

Commentary

The importance of cyber security for retail, as for other sectors, will only grow as a result of digitisation, cloud storage, remote or hybrid working, online retailing growth, digital marketing and advertising – quite apart from threats by state actors to major systems.

Cyber threats relate not just to personal data that is increasingly stored in the cloud or on internal systems - but also to business systems and data which require a computer network to function and for storage of key data.

The threat applies to both small and large businesses and to the supply chain as a whole, where an unprotected small business can be the entry point to the system of a larger business with which it works.

Online retailing was growing at pace prior to the pandemic – but with lockdowns and the closure of many physical stores it expanded even more. That expansion was even more rapid than anticipated or planned for – and extended to many businesses that had never before engaged in online retailing in a major way.

At the same time many employees were working from home. This brought consequent risks to a business where employees connected to business systems but where their cyber protection was minimal or non-existent or compromised by the use of personal equipment being connected at the same time to the same WiFi etc.

It was for these reasons that the NCSC embarked on a major programme to remind businesses of the potential threats of informal arrangements.

The surveys over the past several years have shown that retailers have recognised the importance of the threat, with over 20% this year nominating cyber threats as the top threat to their business, and almost a third as a top three threat, the assessment of the priority no doubt reflecting the nature of their business. Data theft was nominated by 16% of businesses as a top three issue.

However, this year cyber-security dropped to 5th place from 4th in the ranking as a top three threat to business.

Cyber threats are still ranked well below violence, customer theft and fraud, perhaps reflecting the continuing prevalence of physical stores in terms of the threat of violence.

Nearly 45% of retailers noted an increase in cyber security attacks and breaches suffered by their businesses in 2021. This increase was down from the previous year. Nobody has noted an actual decrease since 2016 – and even in that year only just under 10% did.

Against this overall background it is perhaps surprising that expenditure on cyber security decreased by nearly 60% to nearly £70 million, 60% less than the previous year – with a decline also in its share of the crime prevention budget. Some of this may be explained by retail closures and pressure on retail budgets overall – or even a need to target scarce resources to other areas such as the massive increase in incidents of violence and abuse and the comparatively high figure for customer theft. Overall expenditure on crime prevention was also down but by just under 40%.

While the specific types of cyber-attacks attracting most concern do change their order from time to time, ransomware, malware, phishing, whaling and data theft have retained the premier positions with doxing of low concern for most.

“Nearly 45% of retailers noted an increase in cyber security attacks and breaches suffered by their businesses in 2021.”

The BRC Approach

The generally held view is that it is not a question of whether a business will suffer a cyber-attack or breach but when.

The first step to reducing the likelihood or severity of any such attack is acceptance of the potential for an attack right across the business from the top to all levels.

There needs to be an acceptance of responsibility by the Board, or the CEO in a small business, to approve and implement a strategy, to have a plan of action for what to do in the event of an attack or breach and to regularly assess the supply chain to try to ensure that it also is secure.

Every member of staff with access to a computer needs to understand their own personal responsibility not to access unauthorised material or open suspicious emails, for example.

The BRC provides a forum for discussions and exchanges for professionals and those responsible in a more general sense in its IT Community. Through webinars and meetings on specific issues such as cyber insurance or securing the supply chain, the BRC is committed to reaching a wider audience particularly among small and medium businesses.

The BRC works with the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) to alert retailers to the potential cost, both monetary and reputational, of a cyber breach and the need for a plan of action - as once an attack has happened it is too late. The NCSC also provides information about emerging threats and trends such as malvertising.

Our updated cyber security toolkit was prepared with input from the NCSC and provides a ready-made resource on the BRC website.



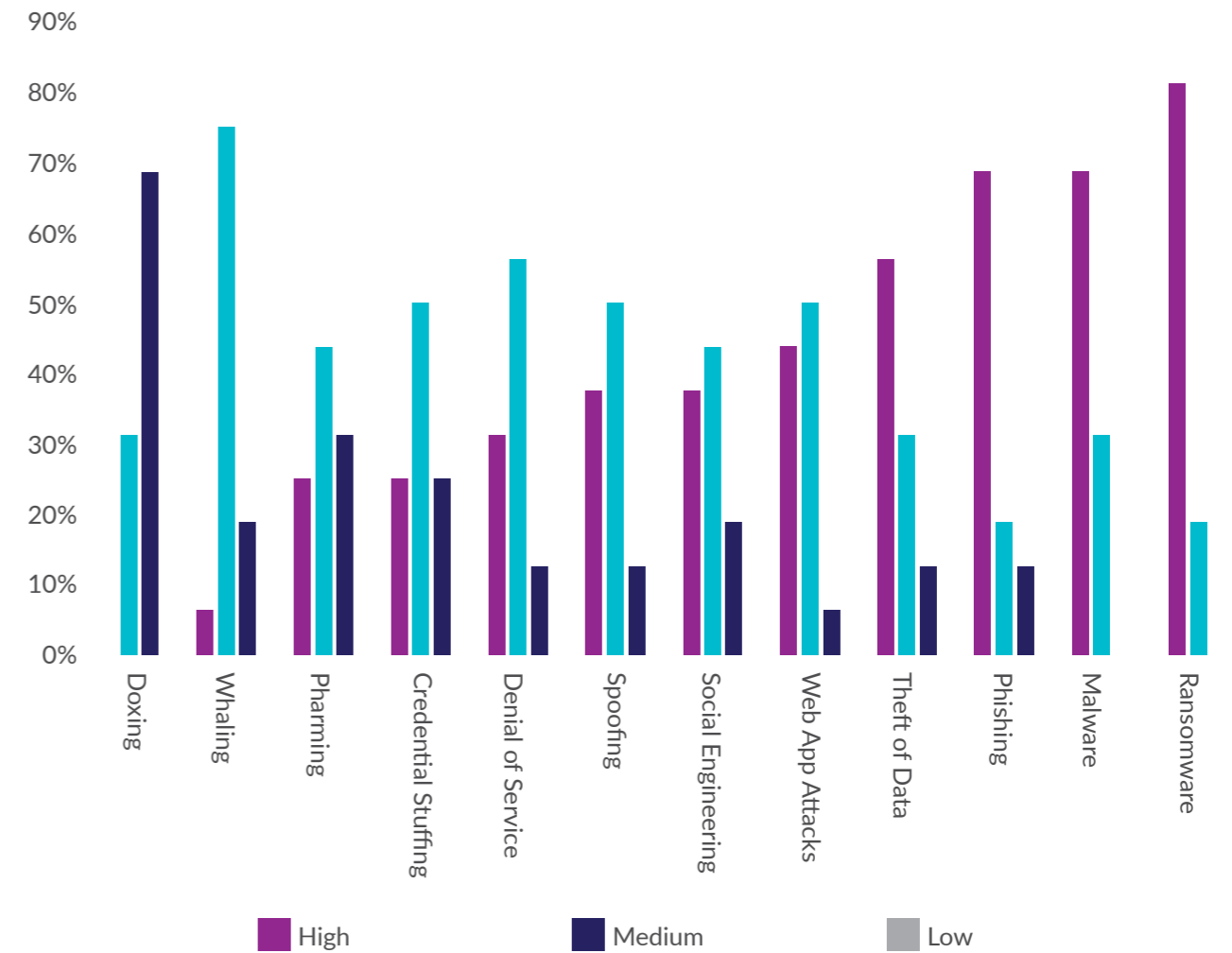
- 1. Recognition of threat
- 2. Buy in from Board, management and staff
- 3. Effective preparation
- 4. Secure by design
- 5. Collaboration with NCSC on imminent and changing threats
- 6. Exchanges among professionals
- 7. BRC cyber-security toolkit



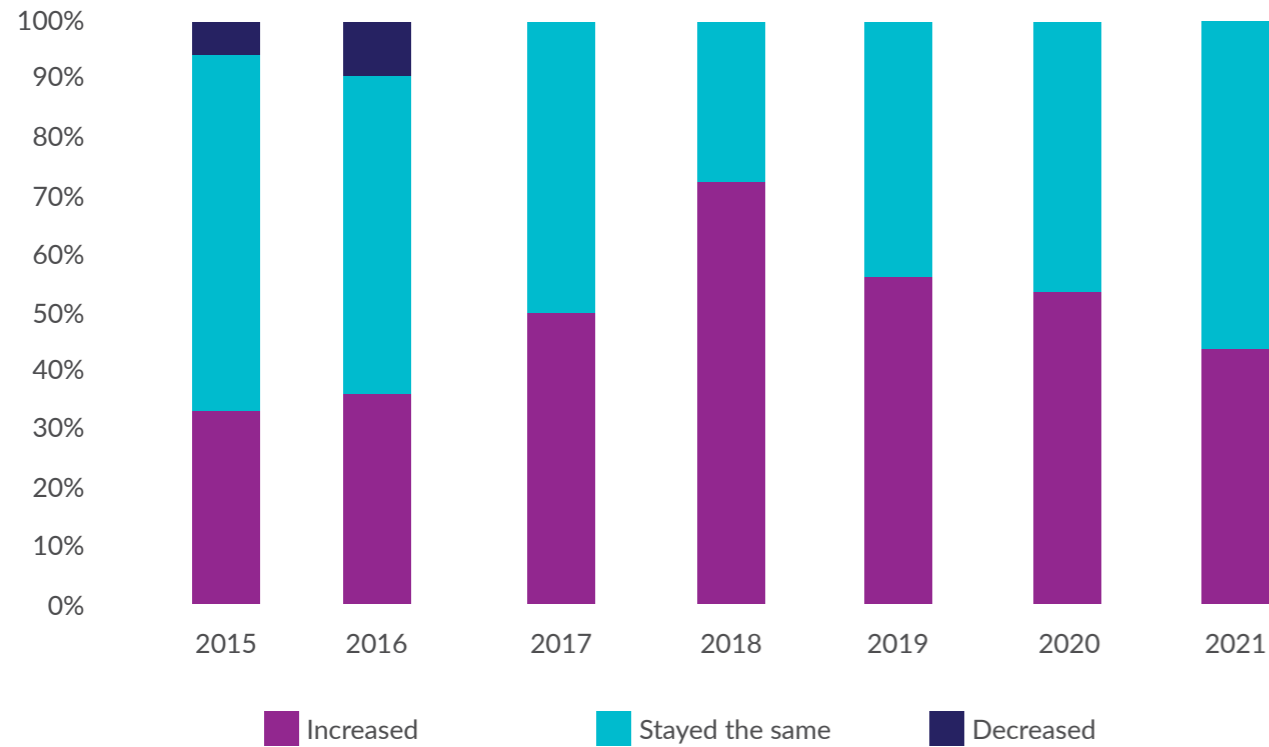
Spending on crime prevention

TOTAL					
Value	995,045,749	1,024,316,054	1,217,403,034	1,188,020,812	714,650,015
% Change from previous year		3%	19%	-2%	-40%
CYBER					
Value	138,928,689.52	162,169,585.23	187,035,724	160,361,984	67,993,553
% Change from previous year		17%	15%	-14%	-58%

Key types of cyber threats



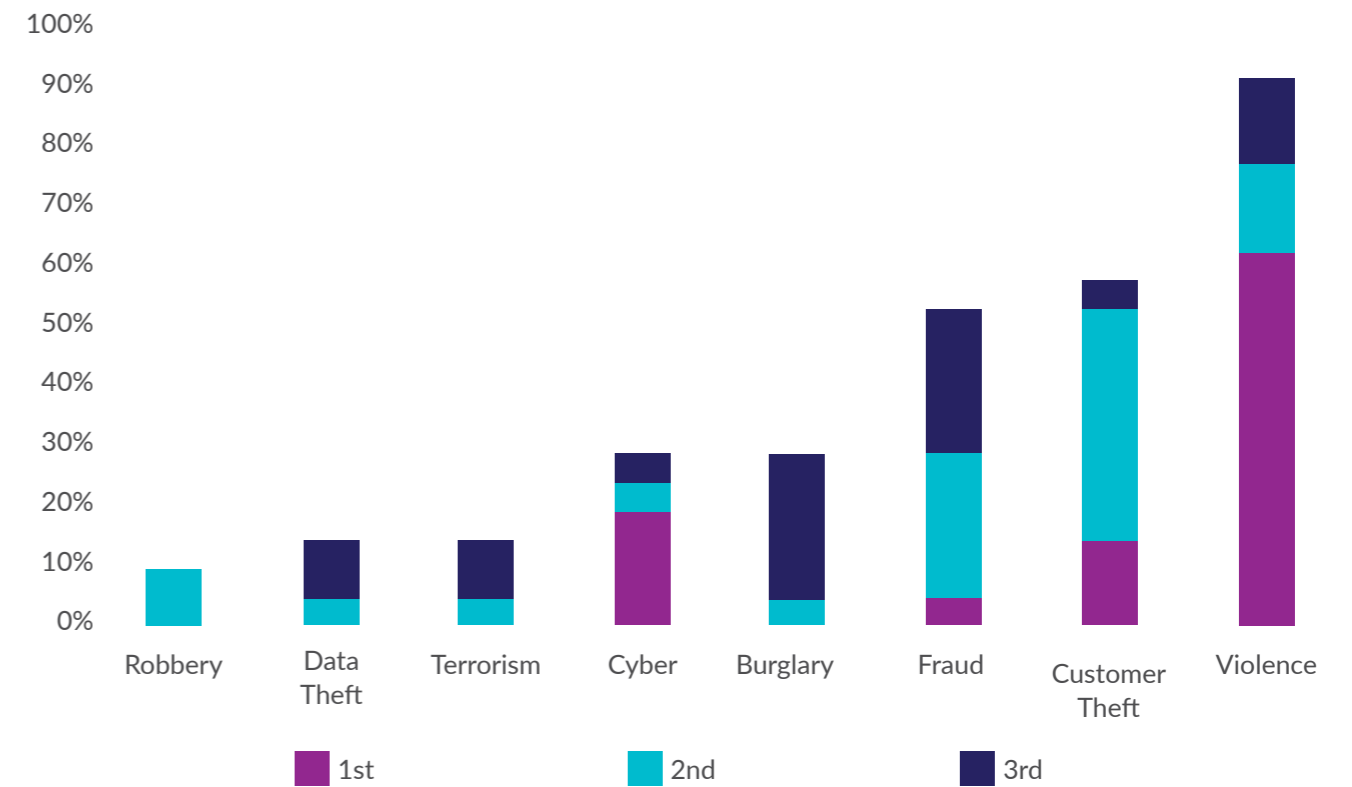
Changes in number of cyber attacks



Most significant overall threats to retail

	ROBBERY	DATA THEFT	TERRORISM	CYBER	BURGLARY	FRAUD	CUSTOMER THEFT	VIOLENCE
1ST	0%	0%	0%	21%	0%	5%	16%	68%
2ND	11%	5%	5%	5%	5%	26%	42%	16%
3RD	0%	11%	11%	5%	26%	26%	5%	16%
TOTAL	11%	16%	16%	32%	32%	58%	63%	100%

How good a job do you think the police do to tackle and respond to the retail crime which you experience?

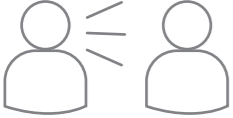













“For retailers, employee welfare is the number one concern – well above any monetary considerations – when looking at the anticipated threats over the next two years.”









GLOSSARY

I. Crime threats / terminology

 <p>ABUSE Incidents of non-physical aggressive, intimidating or abusive behaviour</p>	 <p>BURGLARY Entry into a premises without permission with the intent to steal</p>	 <p>CRIMINAL DAMAGE Deliberate damage or destruction of property, including arson</p>	 <p>CUSTOMER THEFT Theft by customers or those purporting to be honest customers</p>
 <p>CYBER-CRIME Crime that committed through use of ICT (e.g. hacking, malware)</p>	 <p>CYBER-ENABLED CRIME Traditional crime increased in scale by the use of computers, networks</p>	 <p>FRAUD Wrongful or criminal deception intended to result in illegal gain</p>	 <p>ICT Information and Communications Technology</p>
 <p>POLICE RESPONSE Expert opinion of police responses to retail crime</p>	 <p>ROBBERY Force / threat of force used either during / before a theft, or attempt at one</p>	 <p>THEFT Where money, goods, property or services are stolen from the business</p>	 <p>VIOLENCE Assaults and robberies where physical injury may have been sustained</p>

Cyber security terminology

 <p>BLACK HAT HACKER A computer hacker who breaks into an information system or digital network with the purpose of inflicting malicious intent.</p>	 <p>DATA BREACH The ICO defines a personal data breach as “a breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data transmitted, stored or otherwise processed in connection with the provision of a public electronic communications service”.</p>	 <p>DENIAL OF SERVICE ATTACK (DOS) A method of taking a website out of action by overloading or ‘flooding’ the server.</p>	 <p>DOXING Discovering and publishing the identity of an internet user, obtained by tracing their digital footprint.</p>
 <p>HACTIVIST A combination of ‘hacker’ and ‘activist’, someone who uses computers and computer networks to promote a political agenda.</p>	 <p>LOCKED ACCOUNTS Where customers are (usually temporarily) unable to log into their accounts as a result of criminal activity on systems such as, for example, DOS attacks.</p>	 <p>MALWARE A program or malicious software that consists of programming, for example code or scripts, designed to disrupt the performance of PCs, laptops, handheld devices, etc.</p>	 <p>PHISHING A method of accessing valuable personal details, such as usernames and passwords, often through bogus communications such as emails, letters, instant messages or text messages.</p>
 <p>PORT SCANNING A technique employed to identify open ports and services on a network, potentially with a view to exploiting weaknesses illegally.</p>	 <p>PHARMING A method of deceiving an individual into ending up at a fake website, even though the correct URL has been entered.</p>	 <p>RANSOMWARE A type of malware that prevents the use of a system, either by locking the system’s screen or by locking the users’ files unless a ransom is paid.</p>	

 <p>SOCIAL ENGINEERING In a cyber security context, the general art of manipulating people online so they give up confidential information.</p>	 <p>SPEAR PHISHING As per phishing, except that it is a directed attack against a specific target.</p>	 <p>SPOOFING Masquerading as another individual or entity by falsifying data, thereby gaining an illegitimate advantage.</p>	 <p>WEB APPLICATION BASED ATTACKS: For example SQL injection attacks (SQL injection is a code injection technique, used to attack data-driven applications, in which nefarious SQL statements are inserted into an entry field for execution (e.g. to dump the database contents to the attacker).</p>
 <p>THEFT OF DATA Stealing computer-based information from an unknowing victim with the intent of compromising privacy or obtaining confidential information.</p>	 <p>WHALING A type of spear phishing (i.e. specifically directed) attack, such as an e-mail spoofing attempt, that targets senior members ('big fish') of a specific organization, seeking unauthorized access to confidential data.</p>		

Key organisations

<p>NCSC Established in October 2016, the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) aims to be the authoritative voice on information security in the UK.</p> <p>CISP The Cyber-security Information Sharing Partnership is a joint industry/government initiative designed to facilitate the sharing of cyber threat and vulnerability information to reduce the impact on UK business.</p>	<p>NCCU The National Crime Agency's National Cyber Crime Unit (NCCU) leads the UK law enforcement response to cyber-crime, including by coordinating the national response to the most serious threats.</p>	<p>ICO The Information Commissioners Office (ICO) is the UK's independent body set up to uphold information rights. The organisation takes action to change the behaviour of organisations and individuals that collect, use and keep personal information.</p>
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ADDENDUM

The change on prosecutions in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill – an informal note from the Home Office

- The Government is introducing a statutory aggravating factor that will apply where an assault is committed against those providing a public service, performing a public duty or providing a service to the public.
- This amendment will send a very strong signal that assaults of this kind are totally unacceptable. This Government wants to ensure that retail staff and those who are serving the public can feel protected from abuse when working. It will reinforce in statute the seriousness with which the courts should treat these offences.
- This legislative change recognises the very strong public and Parliamentary feeling about assaults against public-facing workers, and builds on the important work already underway by the National Retail Crime Steering Group to ensure that assaults are not seen as part of a retail worker's job.

For the offences that are listed in the provision (listed below), it will be compulsory for the court to treat this as an aggravating factor.

The clause states:

If the offence was committed against a person providing a public service, performing a public duty or providing services to the public, the court –

- Must treat that fact as an aggravating factor, and
- Must state in open court that the offence is so aggravated.

The current sentencing guidelines give the courts guidance that providing a service to the public should be treated as an aggravating factor, and by making this statutory courts must treat it that way.

Who does the provision cover?

The provision applies in cases of assault where an offence is committed by someone over the age of 18 against someone working in the public sector, performing a public duty or providing a service to the public.

For example, this includes retail workers, hospitality workers, those working for/ within central government

and local authorities; parliamentarians; education sector (such as primary and secondary schools, colleges and higher education institutions); social care sector (such as social workers, probation officers) and armed forces.

Which offences does the provision cover?

The offences covered by this provision are:

- common assault and battery, except where section 1 of the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018 applies;
- an offence under any of the following provisions of the Offences against the Person Act 1861— threats to kill, wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, malicious wounding or assault occasioning actual bodily harm;
- an inchoate offence in relation to any of the preceding offences;
- any other offence, where the court considers this factor to be relevant.

What effect will placing the current sentencing guidelines on a statutory footing have?

This legislation will send a very strong signal that assaults of this kind are totally unacceptable. It will reinforce in statute the aggravating factor set out in sentencing guidelines where an offence is committed against a public sector worker, or those providing a service to the public.

This captures a large, wide-ranging group affected by these crimes and we hope it will show these crimes should be taken seriously and reported to police. This Government wants to ensure that those who are serving the public can feel protected from abuse when working.

What impact will the provision have on sentencing?

This provision does not change the current maximum penalties for these offences, but places in statute an aggravating factor, where the assault took place against those who serve the public. Aggravating factors are taken into account by the court when making sentencing decisions.



THE BRITISH RETAIL CONSORTIUM

The BRC's purpose is to make a positive difference to the retail industry and the customers it serves, today and in the future.

Retail is an exciting, dynamic and diverse industry which is going through a period of profound change. Technology is transforming how people shop; costs are increasing; and growth in consumer spending is slow.

The BRC is committed to ensuring the industry thrives through this period of transformation. We tell the story of retail, work with our members to drive positive change and use our expertise and influence to create an economic and policy environment that enables retail businesses to thrive and consumers to benefit.

Our membership comprises over 5,000 businesses delivering £180bn of retail sales and employing over one and half million employees.



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