

Police and retailers launch new partnership aimed at tackling shoplifting.



Police Scotland have teamed up with retailers in the Preston, Seton and Gosford areas of East Lothian to launch a new partnership aimed at tackling shoplifting.

Managers from local Scotmid and Coop stores joined officers earlier in the month to launch the Shopwatch initiative, aimed at reducing retail crime in the area.

Businesses can be a target for opportunistic thefts by shoplifting with this partnership aiming to reduce these crimes in the area.

Officers will work with businesses to provide a range of crime prevention and detection advice which aims to strengthen relationships between the police and local business.

The Shopwatch initiative will enable businesses to share relevant information with the police about suspected criminals and assist with the prosecution of offenders by ensuring that any linked incidents can be taken into account, increasing the chances of suspects being identified. It will also look to enhance ways in which Shopwatch members can provide support to services that aim to divert individuals away from crime.

Constable Allen Paul, Local Delivery Officer for East Lothian said: "The Shopwatch initiative will ensure that the retailers and their staff, who provide an essential service to the public, will have a greater understanding of how to prevent and detect crime.

"Tackling theft shoplifting remains a high priority for police

in East Lothian and we are committed to dealing robustly with these offenders. We are also working with partners to explore prevention opportunities to signpost repeat offenders to that are away from crime and criminality.”

Nick McGuirk, Scotmid’s Profit Protection Manager said: “As a responsible community convenience retailer, Scotmid are delighted to be part of the local Shopwatch scheme.

“With stores situated at the heart of local communities, Scotmid see first-hand how crime and the fear of crime affects the communities we serve.

“Working in partnership with the Police, local authorities and other retailers is the key to a successful long term strategy to tackle crime, especially prolific offenders.”

Eddie McInally, Area Risk Manager for the COOP said: “With the Festive period approaching it is imperative that we as retailers use every resource at our disposal to ensure the safety of our staff and customers, whilst focusing on reducing the impact that crime has on our stores.

“Through working in partnership with Police, Local Authorities and other retailers we have more chance of success in combating organised and opportunistic criminals.

“This local initiative will not only be focusing on the safety of our stores and the crime impact but also looking at ways in which we can provide additional support and services to the community.”

Initially Shopwatch will include all Scotmid and Coop stores in the area and it is hoped that more retailers will join in the coming months.

For more information on business safety please visit www.scotland.police.uk