

# **Shoplifting Taskforce set up to address rise in offences**

**A Retail Crime Taskforce made up of 14 uniformed officers and detectives, as well as four civilian staff, including specialist analysts and an architectural liaison officer has been set-up to address a rise in offences, such as shoplifting.**

The Taskforce was created following a £3 million funding allocation from the Scottish government and will work alongside a range of key stakeholders to deliver a four-strand approach to tackling retail crime – prevent, pursue, protect and prepare.

The uniformed officers will operate within Edinburgh, Glasgow and Lanarkshire, as crime figures show these areas experience the highest levels of retail crime.

Other divisions requiring support with delivering prevention activities and assisting stores protect their premises can request the assistance of specialist Taskforce resources.

On a daily basis the Taskforce will target repeat offenders of retail crime by using analytical data and intelligence to carry out proactive enforcement activities in areas most heavily impacted.

The Taskforce's architectural liaison officer will also be

engaging with retail premises to identify ways in which they can enhance security and crime prevention measures in place and reduce incidents occurring.

In addition to funding the Taskforce, the investment will be used to develop diversionary programmes aimed at reducing re-offending and youth offending, focus on enforcement in relation to repeat offenders and organised crime.

Launching the Retail Crime Taskforce, Assistant Chief Constable Tim Mairs said: "There is no justification for retail crime and the theft of goods from stores, or the harassment and intimidation of employees is certainly not victimless.

"When such offences take place, it can have a significant impact on retail workers, who then feel unsafe at their place of work. This is not acceptable.

"The establishment of the Retail Crime Taskforce demonstrates our commitment to working alongside key partners and the retail sector to both prevent retail crime occurring, but to conduct thorough and professional enforcement activity to identify those responsible whenever it does arise.

"We know that enforcement alone cannot successfully reduce retail crime and so the partnership approach to safeguarding stores and exploring opportunities to work collaboratively to address the root causes of such offences will play a significant role in the work of the Taskforce.

"I am grateful to the Scottish government for the funding allocation that has made this possible and to the agencies who we will work in partnership with to reduce retail crime."

Community Safety Minister Siobhian Brown said: "I welcome this retail crime taskforce, enabled by £3 million of Scottish government funding in 2025/26. This is in addition to a Budget investment of a record £1.62 billion for policing – an

increase of £70 million on 2024/25.

“Retail crime causes significant harm and disruption to individuals and businesses, and I am pleased that this taskforce will work to prevent this type of crime from occurring and to ensure that, when it does happen, perpetrators are brought to justice.”

Employment and Investment Minister Tom Arthur added: “I am particularly pleased that Police Scotland has engaged with the retail sector through the Retail Industry Leadership Group and will continue to do so as the work of the taskforce progresses. Through this joint approach I hope that we can reduce the harm caused by retail crime to businesses and employees.”

Lucy Brown, chair of the Scottish Retail Strategy Industry Leadership Council, said: “While we all know there’s no silver bullet to resolve retail crime, we are very pleased to be here today to support the launch of this new investment.

“We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with Police Scotland and the Scottish government in the coming months and to seeing the results of the investment.”