



NBCC NEWS

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NBCC release report and recommendations to tackle illicit trade in stolen tobacco

The National Business Crime Centre is calling for Tobacco Track and Trace (TT&T) technology to be made available to policing in order to crack down on the illicit trade in stolen tobacco and its resale on the black market.

The NBCC commissioned City, University of London to research and report on the severity of tobacco theft, how it manifests, its far-reaching consequences and how the utilisation of TT&T technology could prove to be a game changer in tackling organised criminal activity and provide law-abiding businesses with the protection that they deserve. The work was funded by the Home Office.

Emmeline Taylor, Professor of Criminology at City, University of London, authored the report, which makes several recommendations including awareness training for police about the existence of TT&T and how it can help them in the identification, investigation and prosecution of serious and organised criminals.

Professor Emmeline Taylor, the report's author says: "Tobacco theft has emerged as a lucrative proposition for organised career criminals who exploit its relatively hidden nature. They operate with the knowledge that not only is there a low likelihood of detection, but if they are apprehended, the penalties will likely be minimal if they do not use or threaten violence during an offence.

"With the increase in tax on tobacco products and the proposed generational ban, the demand for stolen and counterfeit tobacco is set to increase dramatically.

"My report, *Lighting Up*, outlines 8 key recommendations for tackling tobacco theft. Chief among them is to extend the Tobacco Track & Trace app to law enforcement such as the police. This will enable officers to immediately check if tobacco is stolen and, importantly, where from thereby linking offenders to their crimes. TT&T could provide the 'golden thread' to enable the prosecution of some of the most serious and organised criminals operating across the UK.

"Crime control usually involves complex initiatives that understandably can take a long time to come to fruition. Yet, in this case, a key piece of intelligence gathering and evidence building technology could be at the fingertips of the police – they just need to be granted access to use this powerful tool.

"Given access, TT&T will provide a vital tool to in preventing, identifying and prosecuting offenders which will protect law-abiding businesses and ensure that tobacco products are sold legally and responsibly." **Continued on page 2....**



Since 20th May 2019, tobacco manufacturers have been required to provide unique identifier codes on cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco products. Tobacco products are scanned as they make their way through the supply chain and the data is stored in a UK database.

If tobacco is stolen from a shop kiosk for example, and then ends up for sale in another retail outlet, by scanning the tobacco it will show the name of the retail outlet where it was meant to be sold, letting police know that it has been purchased by the retailer illegally.

However, currently the TT&T legislation specifies that only HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) have access to the database (although National Trading Standards can now access the 'app' following the enactment of The Finance Act 2022).

The report makes a total of eight recommendations which includes a call for the legislation around the use and access to TT&T to be revisited so that law enforcement can use it to improve intelligence and investigation into the illegal sale of tobacco products and other associated crimes.

NBCC lead Supt Patrick Holdaway commented: "I would like to thank Emmeline for her work on the report and for the recommendations. If police were able to access Tobacco Track and Trace App and the database, they would be able to routinely check tobacco being sold by local retailers to ensure it was legitimate. This would undoubtedly act as deterrent to any retailers thinking about purchasing tobacco on the black market and reselling it. In turn that reduces the demand for criminals to steal it in the first place as they will have less people willing to buy it from them. The NBCC will work with the relevant partners and stakeholders to explore how the recommendations can be implemented."

The full report can be downloaded via the NBCC website by clicking the link below:

[Lighting Up: How Tobacco Track and Trace Could Help Illuminate Stolen Goods Markets and Other Serious Crimes](#)



King's Speech refers to tackling ASB and Retail Crime

In July the details around the King's Speech were released which specifically addressed Anti-Social Behaviour and protection of shopworkers. The main points are below:

Crackdown on anti social behaviour.

Introduce new Respect Orders to tackle persistent adult offenders, fast-track Public Spaces Protection Orders to make it quicker and easier to clamp down on rapid escalations in street drinking, and new powers to tackle the dangerous and anti social use of off-road bikes. Create a duty for local partners to co-operate to tackle anti social behaviour, with an anti social behaviour lead in every local authority area.

Tackle retail crime.

Create a new specific offence of assaulting a shopworker and introduce stronger measures to tackle low level shoplifting.

The full details of the King's Speech can be found here:

[FINAL - 17/07/24 King's Speech 2024 background briefing final GOV.uk.docx \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

NBCC on the road

Heart of the Community - 8th July

Patrick supported the Association of Convenience Stores event held at the House of Commons. Timed to coincide with the start of the new Government's term in power, the event, ACS' biggest political event of the year, aimed to connect retailers with senior policymakers and politicians to discuss the impact of the political landscape on convenience stores, both now and in the future. The event was attended by a number of new and existing MPs with Sarah Owen MP giving an opening address.



Serious Organised Crime Partnerships Day - 15th July, follow up session on the 29th July

The event on the 15th was hosted by the Princes Trust in London where it set the scene on the work already taking place to help and support those with personal challenges including ex-offenders getting into work, therefore keeping them away from crime.

At the follow up event in the Home Office, Patrick gave a presentation with Jason Dean from the Security Industry Authority, on the impact of retail crime to an eclectic audience of retailers, retailer associations, government officials and key representatives from the charity sector. The focus was on how all parties could work together to build upon the success already seen to support offenders to change their lives and stop the cycle of reoffending. With limited prison spaces and evidence that short term sentences don't work, the NBCC sees this as a critical area of work; a number of new connections were made and a further event is planned for later this year.

International Security Officers' Days - 24th July

With events happening all over the country Patrick supported a celebration event held at the historic Lloyds of London. Patrick, joined by Heather Baily QPM, Chief Exec of the Security Industry Authority and Don Randall MBE, Chair of the City Crime Prevention Association, gave a speech on the collaboration of private security with law enforcement.



The event was well attended and highlighted the important role that private security increasingly plays in our town, cities and public open spaces. The forthcoming introduction of the Protect Duty announced in the King's Speech will further enhance their role and provide additional opportunities for collaboration.

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Force Focus - Thames Valley Police

Fighting Back Against Retail Crime: Reading 2024 was a collaboration between business, police, partners and security experts to come together and demonstrate our collective strength against those who choose to do harm.

The day was facilitated by Reading Business Improvement District and hosted in a suite within The Oracle Shopping Centre. Seven security experts gave live demonstrations and provided tailored advice to retailers about their innovative solutions.

Local police were in attendance to support the conversations and discuss what was being done to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. Police also gave updates on enforcement activity in the town including a local retailer who had been closed down due to suspected involvement in handling stolen property (case ongoing).

Two interactive sessions allowed senior staff from national and local retailers to gain first-hand experience of the benefits of the preventative methods on view and work is ongoing to develop the connections made to create safer spaces for employees and shoppers alike.

Members of the public were also engaged with many commenting on how they were pleased to see steps being taken to stop thieves.

Alexa Volker, Reading BID Manager said: "The recent Fighting Back event in Reading was a great example of partnership working between Police, security contractors, stakeholders and retailers. Bringing together likeminded organisations with a single aim to protect our retailers and high street, it gave those affected by shoplifting an introduction to the many and varied tools available to 'fight back' and also an opportunity to network with Police and stakeholders alike."

Becky Ottery, owner Eclectic Games, Union Street, Reading commented: "It was great to see the partnership on display between the BID, the police and the retail community, and that there were accessible measures for all sizes of businesses to protect their staff and stock. I was particularly impressed with the DISC system, and can confirm how useful it is from personal experience"

Superintendent Steve Raffield, Reading local commander added: "Today's event is about all of us coming together in collaboration to create safer environments for retailers whilst ensuring that we, the police, have the best opportunity to disrupt and pursue those who choose to steal or use violence. I am so grateful to The Oracle Shopping Centre and Reading Business Improvement District for providing the space and pulling this together and to the security experts for providing a wonderful show of preventative measures. This has contributed to a fantastic event and enabled the many positive conversations that we have seen today. Reading LPA is committed to its business communities and I've been pleased with the response from my officers – arresting violent and repeat offenders and obtaining Criminal Behaviour Orders to ensure ongoing protection. Policing has a significant part to play in this fight against retail crime and we will continue to develop our understanding of the key issues faced by those within our business communities whilst improving our operational response."

[Fighting Back Against Retail Crime in Reading - Business \(visit-reading.com\)](https://www.visit-reading.com)

[The Oracle hosts event to further bolster partnerships with shops and police amid continued retail crime spikes – Reading Today Online \(rdg.today\)](https://www.rdg.today)

[Fight Back Against Retail Crime Event Highlights - With Thames Valley Police and Reading BID. \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com)

The day was attended by over 60 retailers and partners and we are excited that initial discussions are underway to create similar events in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.



NBCC release standardised witness statement to support retail crime investigations

The NBCC have worked with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and police forces to develop a standard witness statement which retailers can use when submitting CCTV evidence to the police using a Digital Evidence Management Systems (DEMS).

The standardised statement will ensure retailers provide all of the information the police need to process the CCTV as evidence in a criminal case.

Supt Patrick Holdaway, lead for the NBCC explains: “Many retailers have the ability to upload CCTV onto DEMS but there was a myriad of different statements being used by police forces. Following some workshops with retailers there was a call for a consistent statement format to be used to help retailers and police.

“The challenge was to develop a statement that could be accepted by all police forces. Through identification of best practice, the NBCC have worked with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and police forces to create a standard version, which CPS are happy with.”

As reported in the Retail Crime Action Plan, sharing digital evidence via DEMS provides the quickest, most effective and secure way to share CCTV and images. Expedited delivery of CCTV footage/images will benefit investigations and will support longer term prevention strategies. More information about DEMS can be found here: [Can your CCTV transfer digital evidence to police? \(nbcc.police.uk\)](https://nbcc.police.uk/can-your-cctv-transfer-digital-evidence-to-police/)

The new witness statement is available as a download on the website and will be accepted by all police forces across England and Wales: [Video Witness Statement](#)

NBCC launches 2024 national Safer Business Action Week to target business crime

The National Business Crime Centre (NBCC) is pleased to confirm that the 2024 Safer Business Action Week is due to be held in October with police and partners across the country joining together to tackle business crime in their communities.

The SABA Week will start on Monday 14th October and will involve Business Reductions Partnerships (BCRPs), Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and the private security industry working with local police forces to deliver a focussed operation with joint patrols, the targeted intervention of offenders and a range of crime prevention activity including raising awareness the local issues with the general public.

Bespoke branding has been created for police forces and partners to use to promote their involvement in the week, and the NBCC will be supporting with planning and marketing all of the various activities taking place. The Communications Toolkit with links to the branding can be downloaded here:

[Safer Business Action \(SaBA\) Week Communications Guidance](#)

The NBCC are keen to get businesses supporting their local police force during the week and have prepared a guide to highlight the week and provide suggestions as to how they can get involved.

[Safer Business Action Week - Partner Guide](#)

Further digital assets for those taking part to use on social media are being developed and will be added to the toolkit during August.

