



NBCC NEWS

November 2024 - Issue 23

KFC and Cineworld join the NBCC national safe spaces scheme

The National Business Crime Centre is delighted to announce that restaurant chain KFC UK&I and UK multiplex cinema chain Cineworld, have signed up for the NBCC Safe Spaces scheme otherwise known as Op Portum.

The move will create hundreds more safe spaces for people feeling vulnerable or in need of help in towns and cities across the country, as the scheme is rolled out across more than a thousand KFC restaurants and 94 Cineworld cinemas.

The NBCC is working in partnership with KFC and Cineworld to provide guidance and a step-by-step process to assist them in the planning, creating and implementation of a safe spaces scheme across their organisations.

NBCC lead Patrick Holdaway said: "To have two huge household names like KFC and Cineworld joining the scheme is fantastic news. It provides so many more safe spaces for people to go, knowing that the staff there have been trained to support them. Safety of women and girls is such a big issue so the more safe spaces we can create on a national level, the safer people will feel when they are going about their daily lives.

"Since the launch of the Safe Spaces scheme 12 months ago, we have signed up national retailers and supermarkets, the private security industry and hospitality. As a result there are now over 14,300 of safe spaces helping to protect people.

A spokesperson for KFC commented on why they joined the scheme: "As a business which is committed to being a good neighbour to our local communities, we were really keen to roll out NBCC's Safe Space initiative across our restaurants. The scheme offers a simple model for our teams to provide a safe environment for anyone coming into our restaurants needing help. Since introducing the initiative we've seen a hugely positive response to the scheme from our restaurant teams and from our franchisees and would encourage others within our sector to speak to the NBCC about how they can get involved."

For more information on the Safe Spaces scheme and how to join please click the link: [Safe Spaces](#)



Operation Portum
**Creating Safe
Spaces in Retail**



NBCC to be given £2 million of Government funding

As part of the Autumn budget, and building on current Home Office funding, The Government committed to providing the following additional funding to help tackle retail crime:

- £2 million over three years to the National Business Crime Centre, a resource for police and businesses to learn, share and support each other to prevent and combat crime;
- £100k in 2025-26 for the National Police Chiefs' Council for further training on prevention tactics.
- £5 million over three years to continue to fund a specialist analysis team within Opal, the National Policing Intelligence Unit for serious organised acquisitive crime, to crack down on organised gangs targeting retailers;

The government also announced it would remove the threshold for shop theft under £200 and make it a specific criminal offence for assaults on shopworkers.

In response to the announcement, NBCC lead Patrick Holdaway said: "This investment in the NBCC allows us to plan for the future, something which has been a challenge over the last few years.

"I'd like to think that the funding is testament to all the hard work of the various team members over the years, and the support that it offers both policing and the business sector in tackling crime. We are a very small team with a national remit and this funding will enable us to do so much more."

Over 750 arrests made for shop theft and other offences as part of SaBA Week

Police have made over 750 arrests as part of the NBCC national week of action which took place in October to tackle retail and business crime.

All police forces in England and Wales, along with The Police Service of Northern Ireland, supported the Safer Business Action (SaBA) Week, and the results show that it has had a significant impact in disrupting and tackling prolific offender of shop theft and other business crime.

Over 30 forces have reported their results back to the NBCC so far and between them they held over 650 SaBA Days and involved over 3,400 police officers working alongside private security, BCRPs, BIDs and other partners. Results included:

A 42 year-old man from Eastbourne was been arrested following a 'spree of offences' including assault on an emergency worker.

In Carlisle, one man was arrested who was on a warrant for failing to appear at court charged with a shoplifting offence and breach of a Community Behaviour Order (CBO).

In St Albans, six people were arrested on suspicion of shoplifting, while a large quantity of drugs were found. One man was summoned directly to court for shoplifting offences, with five others being given community resolutions.

Merseyside Police made 12 arrests and four people were charged with theft offences. One man was sentenced to 12-weeks in prison for theft of bottles of '19 Crimes' wine after police spotted a man on Ryedale Close with items stuffed down his jumper.

Greater Manchester Police arrested five people and secured 15 charges for alleged shoplifting offences in just 24 hours.

In West Bridgford, a prolific offender of shop theft was sentenced to 26 weeks after repeatedly flouting a court order that bans him from attending stores.

In Belfast, two people were arrested after the report of a burglary at a shopping centre in Belfast.



NBCC on the road

On the **6th November** Patrick supported an event held by the Institute of Couriers where he gave a presentation on the work the NBCC had done to support the courier sector. The focus was on tackling organised crime and the growing threat to delivery driver who were being targeted for the goods they carry. Our crime prevention guidance on delivery driver security is [here](#).

Patrick attended the Retail Trust Breakfast briefing on the **26th November** where their Chief Exec Chris Brook-Carter, highlighted the challenges in the sector where a recent survey showed that 40% of retail workers are considering leaving due to the levels of violence and abuse. British Retail Consortium Chief Exec, Helen Dickinson also addressed the audience to discuss the work they are doing to support the sector. The following week the Retail Trust were given advertising space in Piccadilly Circus to raise the profile of their work.



Patrick give a presentation to the Food and Drink Security Association on the **28th November**, hosted by the National Cyber Security Centre in London. Membership of the group is an eclectic range of grocers, food manufacturers and the hospitality sector who come together to share guidance and advice.

On the **3rd December**, Patrick was privileged to provide the policing update at the inaugural Retail Crime Forum, chaired by the Policing Minister Dame Diana Johnson, at the Home Office.

As well as providing updates on the Retail Crime Action Plan, Patrick highlighted some of the work that will be launched early in 2025, which includes an updated National Accreditation Scheme for BCRPs; the scheme has been developed in conjunction with a number of partners including the National Association of BCRPs.

Another area of work which is creating a lot of excitement is a new approach to data sharing. It is critical that the police can share data effectively and safely with the retail sector, which allows businesses to put in place measures to protect their staff and customers. The guidance to this new approach is currently being finalised and will be launched in the new year.



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Banknote Checking Scheme

The run up to Christmas can be a time when businesses are at greater risk of being targeted with counterfeit banknotes, due to an increase of cash use, the hiring of new staff and stores being busier.

Counterfeiters target businesses where they know that banknotes aren't being checked properly. People trying to use counterfeit banknotes will often try to buy a low-value item using a high-value note such as a £20 note. This is so that they can get away with your stock and money from your till.

The quickest way for businesses to protect themselves from accepting counterfeit banknotes is to sign up for the Bank Note Checking Scheme and get access to key resources and training materials.

The Scheme is completely free and enables businesses to reduce the financial loss and reputational risks caused by counterfeit banknotes.

The Bank of England also provides free online training which highlights the security and design features of banknotes and includes a short test. It takes about 30 minutes to complete. All the resources and training can be found via this link:

[Advice for retailers and businesses | Bank of England](#)



Support for Shopworkers

Christmas shopping can be stressful with long queues and crowds resulting in more incidents of violence and abuse towards shopworkers.

The NBCC has a series of videos designed as a training aid for those working in the retail sector to help them defuse and avoid conflict.

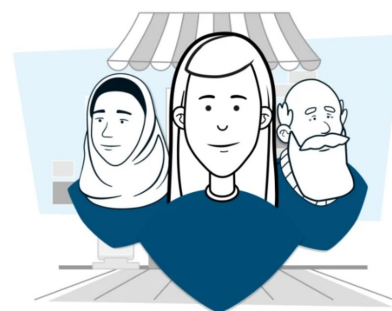
The four training videos cover: personal safety and de-escalation, saying no - refusing service, deterring and interacting with thieves and handling disruptive behaviour. The videos can be downloaded via this link: [Shopworker Videos](#)

The NBCC also supports and promotes the #ShopKind campaign, which is backed by the Home Office and supported by major high street retailers as well as the nation's independent shopkeepers, and the shopworkers union Usdaw. The aim of the campaign is to encourage positive behaviours in shops, acknowledge the important role of shopworkers and raise awareness about the scale and impact of violence and abuse against shopworkers.

ShopKind is for the whole retail sector and they are encouraged to download the print and social media campaign materials and use them in stores.

All the material can be found on the NBCC website: [Shopkind Webpage](#)

Personal safety and de-escalation



VIEW VIDEO: PERSONAL SAFETY AND DE-ESCALATION