

Convenience retailers invest millions of pounds in crime prevention equipment to keep their shops, communities and colleagues safe. Here are some of the most common types of crime prevention equipment that retailers use in their stores.



Headsets

We have had headsets in our store for two years, the headsets are great for improving communication throughout the store, making colleagues feel less isolated and safer. I think the return on investment for the headsets has been great.

Judith Smitham Independent Retailer in Truro, Cornwall

Body worn cameras

We introduced body-worn cameras across all our stores. After evaluating several models, we selected small cameras with front-facing screens, which act as an additional deterrent – abusive customers can see their own reflection. This helps our colleagues feel empowered in the face of abuse, knowing the business is fully committed to their safety.

Mark Foulds Security Manager, Lincolnshire Co-operative

CCTV

We have been investing in CCTV improvements a lot over the past few years, I am able to livestream the CCTV footage directly to my phone which helps to make colleagues feel safer. The footage from the CCTV cameras is very useful when reporting crimes to the police.

Natalie Lightfoot Independent Retailer in Glasgow

Central information hub

We are implementing a central information hub into our stores over the coming months, this is basically an iPad where all store information like training and staff records, CCTV video and stock information can be kept. Colleagues will be able to report crimes and store evidence on the iPad, the hope is that with the correct training staff will feel more confident to report crimes.

Chloe Taylor Green Independent Retailer in Stafford

Defensive merchandising

We have been working to implement bespoke stickers on high-risk items that identify the original location that the item was stolen from. This method of fighting shop theft disrupts the disposal chain for stolen items we have found it to be very effective and is extremely cost effective.

Gareth Lewis Loss Prevention & Security Services Manager at Southern Co-op

Facial recognition software

We have put facial recognition software into our store to monitor repeat offending beyond what store staff are capable of, meaning colleagues have better awareness and oversight when an offender returns to store. It also provides clearer images for police to use.

Dave Pickford Director, James Hall & Co. Ltd

Gareth Lewis
Loss Prevention & Security Services Manager at Southern Co-op

Problem: Prolific shoplifting / resale theft

Solution: Defensive Merchandising – branded stickers

One of our major challenges is the bulk theft of merchandise, which is then resold through other outlets. Our solution has been to disrupt the offenders' supply chain. While we've experimented with various defensive merchandising methods, such as nets and alarms, the most successful strategy has been using tagged and branded stickers on high-value items. These stickers display the original point of sale, are extremely difficult to remove, and aid in prosecution by making stolen goods easily identifiable. Additionally, this approach allows us to recover stolen items, as the origin is unmistakable. In trial stores, we've seen a significant reduction in theft, with each sticker costing just 2p – providing a strong return on investment compared to other defensive merchandising methods. In 2023-2024, we defied the trend by reducing theft value, a direct result of focusing on disrupting the supply chains of repeat offenders.

Natalie Lightfoot
Independent Retailer in Glasgow

Problem: High value shoplifting, particularly alcohol

Solution: CCTV coverage and training

In our stores, we often encounter theft driven by addiction, which can pose significant risks to staff. Balancing staff safety with effective theft deterrence is challenging; we want to ensure staff can engage with shoplifters without putting themselves in harm's way. To address this, we regularly review our CCTV to ensure it provides the highest quality footage and coverage possible. We're also collaborating with local police to expand coverage beyond our immediate premises. Crucially, we train our staff to use the CCTV systems daily, enabling everyone on the shop floor to access footage and submit evidence to the police. I also have live CCTV access on my phone, so in emergency situations, my colleagues can contact me, and I can immediately view the store. Our goal in tackling theft is to build a reputation for being a difficult target, and ensuring our CCTV is extensive and easily accessible is essential.

Judith Smitham
Independent Retailer in Truro, Cornwall

Problem: Colleague safety and isolation

Solution: Headsets for internal communication

In our area, we're fortunate not to face the challenges of large organised crime gangs, but shoplifting remains a near-daily issue. While our colleagues are trained to spot potential thieves, it can be isolating to handle a situation alone on the shop floor. Our colleague headsets have helped to provide a sense of connection and support—allowing staff to call for assistance wherever they are in the store. We've been using these headsets for two years and are pleased with the return on investment, as colleague safety is our top priority. Additionally, we've received positive feedback from regular customers, who appreciate the added safety measures for our staff.

Chloe Taylor-Green
Independent Retailer in Stafford

Problem: Managing training and records

Solution: Streamlined recording and reporting

Recruiting and training colleagues is a challenge for any business, but it becomes even more difficult when staff feel unsafe due to rising retail crime. We are supporting our colleagues by prioritising their safety and streamlining the way we record and report crime. We have a dedicated internal system for reporting crime in our stores. Colleagues log incidents of theft, abuse, or violence directly onto a store tablet as they occur, with the ability to upload reports to the local police force in real-time. Additionally, we can backdate paper records to gain better insight into crime trends over time. The tablet also serves as a training hub, allowing us to track which modules colleagues have completed and ensuring they have access to the support and guidance needed to handle crime effectively. While the tablet required a larger upfront investment, it quickly paid for itself by saving valuable admin hours.

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