



The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

Helen Dickinson OBE
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2 July 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

Violence and abuse against retail workers

We are writing to you again as retail industry leaders to ask you to take action to curb the shocking violence and abuse experienced every day by our colleagues.

Amendments have been tabled at report stage of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, which we believe will provide better protection for our colleagues; we call on you to ensure that an amendment is passed which delivers this outcome for retail workers.

The latest figures make grim reading: the BRC's most recent crime survey shows a 7% year-on-year increase in incidents of violence and abuse in 2019 – 455 cases each day – while recent research by retailers shows that the rate of incidents has risen even further during the pandemic, as our colleagues have been working hard to ensure shops are safe and customers follow Covid-19 rules. One business reports a 76% increase in abuse and a 10% increase in violent attacks during Covid-19, of which over half involved a weapon, and many of our colleagues have been coughed at or spat on. Other flashpoints include encountering shoplifters or challenging customers for ID when they are purchasing age restricted items.

This was a very serious issue for retailers long before the pandemic and the situation cannot be allowed to get any worse – there is a clear need now for better protection in law for retail workers. This aligns with the view of the Home Affairs Select Committee which published a report on the issue this week and would ensure our colleagues in England and Wales are treated the same as those in Scotland, where Daniel Johnson MSP's Protection of Workers Bill became law earlier this year.

Our colleagues have been hailed 'heroes' of the pandemic, putting themselves on the front line to keep customers safe and to ensure the public can access the goods and services they need; yet their personal safety has been threatened as a result. Victims of abuse, threats and violence carry those experiences with them for life. It affects their colleagues who support them, the families they go home to, their friends, their communities. What is worse is that many are coming to accept that this is just a part of their job. This cannot go on.

We are doing all we can to tackle this problem, and together we have invested £1.2 billion in crime prevention measures in the last year. This includes a wide range of additional protections, with some companies supplying body-worn cameras and employing more security guards.

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British Retail Consortium - a company limited by guarantee
Registered in England and Wales No. 40572
registered office: 100 Avebury Boulevard, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 1FH



While most customers treat our colleagues with respect and kindness, action must be taken to deter those who think it is acceptable to be abusive or violent. We are asking you to act to protect our colleagues from further harm.

Yours sincerely

Giles Hurley, Chief Executive Officer - UK and IRE, ALDI

John Boumphrey, UK Country Manager, Amazon UK

Jacqueline Gold CBE, CEO, Ann Summers

Roger Burnley, President & CEO, ASDA

Nick Beighton, CEO, ASOS.com

Peter Macnab, Chief Executive Officer, A.S. Watson Health & Beauty UK

James Lowman, Chief Executive, Association of Convenience Stores

Graham Bell, CEO, B&Q

Mark Jackson, CEO, Bensons for Beds Retail

Sebastian Hobbs, Chief Executive, Bestway National Chemists Ltd - Well Pharmacy

Andrew Goodacre, Chief Executive, BIRA

Alasdair Murdoch, Group CEO, BKUK Group

Meryl Halls, Managing Director, Booksellers Association

Sebastian James, Senior Vice President and Managing Director, Boots UK

Helen Dickinson, Chief Executive, British Retail Consortium

Darcy Willson-Rymer, Chief Executive, Card Factory

Wilf Walsh, CEO, Carpetright

Melinda Paraie, CEO, Cath Kidston

Debbie Robinson, Chief Executive, Central England Co-operative

Steph McGinty, Group Managing Director, Company Shop

Neil Lake, UK&I Managing Director, Costa Coffee

Eric Mazillier, CEO – UK, Decathlon UK

Tim Stacey, Chief Executive, DFS Furniture

Alexander Baldock, Group Chief Executive, Dixons Carphone

Kenny Wilson, Chief Executive, Dr Martens

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Daniel Rubin, Chief Executive, Dune Group

Nick Wilkinson, CEO, Dunelm Group

Roger Grosvenor, Joint CEO, East of England Co-operative

Ed Duggan, Finance & Commercial Director, Fishpools

Noel Coyle, CEO, Fraser Hart

Peter J Harrison, Chief Executive, Furniture Village

Roger Whiteside, Chief Executive Officer, Greggs

Graham Stapleton, CEO, Halfords Group

Manju Malhotra, Chief Executive Officer, Harvey Nichols

Doug Putman, Owner, hmv

Dominic Jordan, CEO, HobbyCraft

Damian McGloughlin, CEO, Homebase

Tarsem Dhaliwal, Group CEO, Iceland & The Food Warehouse

Peter Jelkeby, UK & IE Country Manager, IKEA

Peter Cowgill, Executive Chairman, JD Sports Fashion

Pippa Wicks, Executive Director, John Lewis

Christian Härtnagel, CEO, Lidl GB

Alia Hawa, Managing Director - UK & Ireland, L'Occitane

Debbie Bond, CCO, Lovehoney

John Colley, Executive Chairman and CEO, Majestic Wine

Damian Evans, CEO, MandM Direct

Steve Rowe, Chief Executive, Marks & Spencer

Stephen Johnson, Executive Chairman, Matalan Retail

Jonathan Miller, CEO, McColl's Retail Group

Paul Pomroy, CEO, McDonald's

Phil Ponsonby, CEO, Mid Counties Co-operative

Anthony Short, Executive Director, Music Industries Association

Nigel Oddy, Chief Executive Officer, New Look

Jace Tyrrell, Chief Executive, New West End Company

Ken Towle, CEO, Nisa

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Claire Davenport, CEO, Not on the High Street

Paul Stirling, Group Retail Director G1, One O One Convenience Stores

Olly Raeburn, Chief Executive Officer, Paperchase

Peter Pritchard, CEO, Pets at Home

Nick Read, Group CEO, Post Office Ltd

Paul Marchant, CEO, Primark

Justin Stead, CEO, Radley+Co

Howard Saycell, CEO, RETRA

Julie Abraham, CEO, Richer Sounds

Mark Warren, Country Director, Rigby & Peller

Warren Cohen, COO, River Island

Simon Roberts, Chief Executive Officer, Sainsbury's

Doug Winchester, Managing Director, Savers

Colin Temple, Managing Director, Schuh

John Brodie, Chief Executive, Scottish Midland Co-operative Society

John Mewett, CEO, Screwfix

Paul Hayes, CEO, Seasalt

Steve Reid, CEO and Co-Founder, Simba Sleep

Mark Smith, CEO, Southern England Co-operative

Andy Lightfoot, CEO, Space NK

Louise Hoste, Managing Director, Spar UK

Paul Marshall, Managing Director, Specsavers

Alex Rayner, vp & General Manager, Starbucks UK

Gordon Mearns, Managing Director, Sterling Furniture Group

Paul Kendrick, CEO, Studio Retail Group

Rachel Osborne, CEO, Ted Baker

Tobin James, Managing Director, Tempur UK

Jason Tarry, UK CEO, Tesco

David Boynton, Chief Executive/Linda Campbell, UK Managing Director, The Bodyshop UK

Jo Whitfield, Food CEO, The Co-op Group

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Sanjay Vadera, Chief Executive, The Fragrance Shop

Patrick Birkbeck, Managing Director, The House of Bruar

Adrian Woolford, Managing Director, The Orvis Company

Michael Rolland, Managing Director, The Paint Shed

Gill Smith, Managing Director, The Perfume Shop

Henry Birch, Group Chief Executive, The Very Group

Mary Homer, Chief Executive Officer, The White Company

Gavin Peck, CEO, The Works Stores

Kypros Kyprianou, Group CEO, Theo Paphitis Retail Group

Robert Parker, CEO, Topps Tiles

Onur Koksal, CEO, Vision Express

James Bailey, Executive Director, Waitrose

Nathan Smith, CEO, Whittard of Chelsea

Carl Cowling, Group Chief Executive, WHSmith

David Wood, CEO, Wickes

Jerome Saint-Marc, Chief Executive, Wilko

David Potts, Chief Executive, WM Morrison

Cc: The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP, Secretary of State for the Home Department
The Rt Hon Robert Buckland QC MP, Secretary of State for Justice
The Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP, Secretary of State for Business, Energy
and Industrial Strategy
Kit Malthouse MP, Minister of State for Crime and Policing
Paul Scully MP, Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets

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